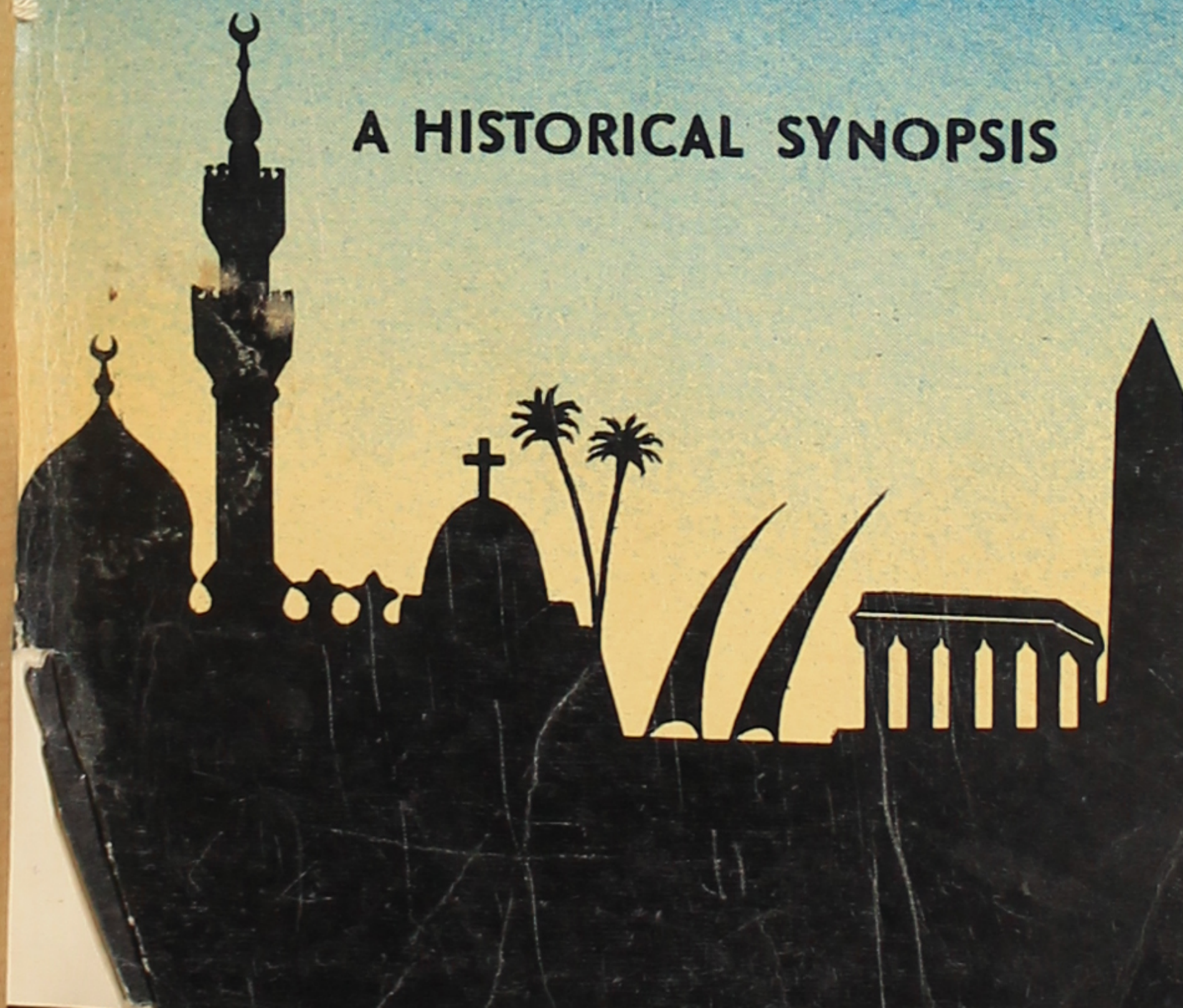




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# Egypt

A HISTORICAL SYNOPSIS









# Egypt

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## A HISTORICAL SYNOPSIS



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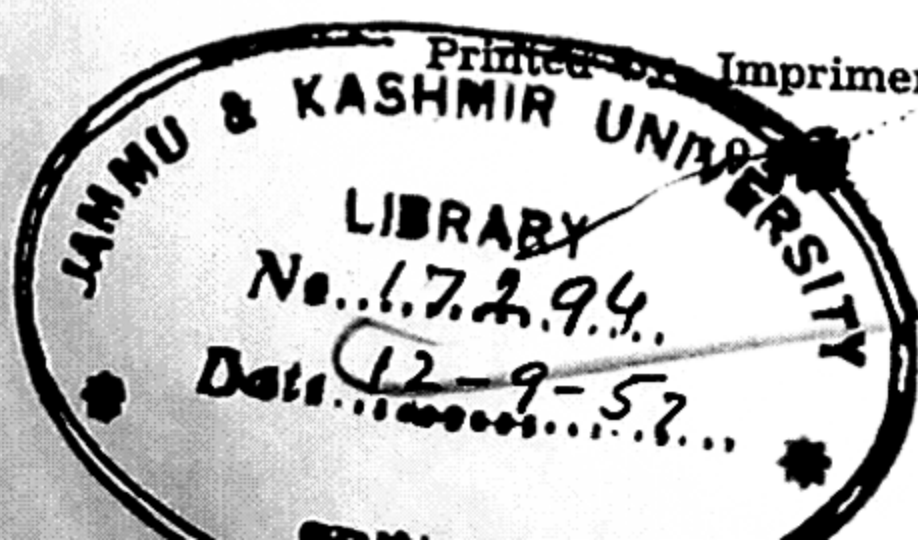
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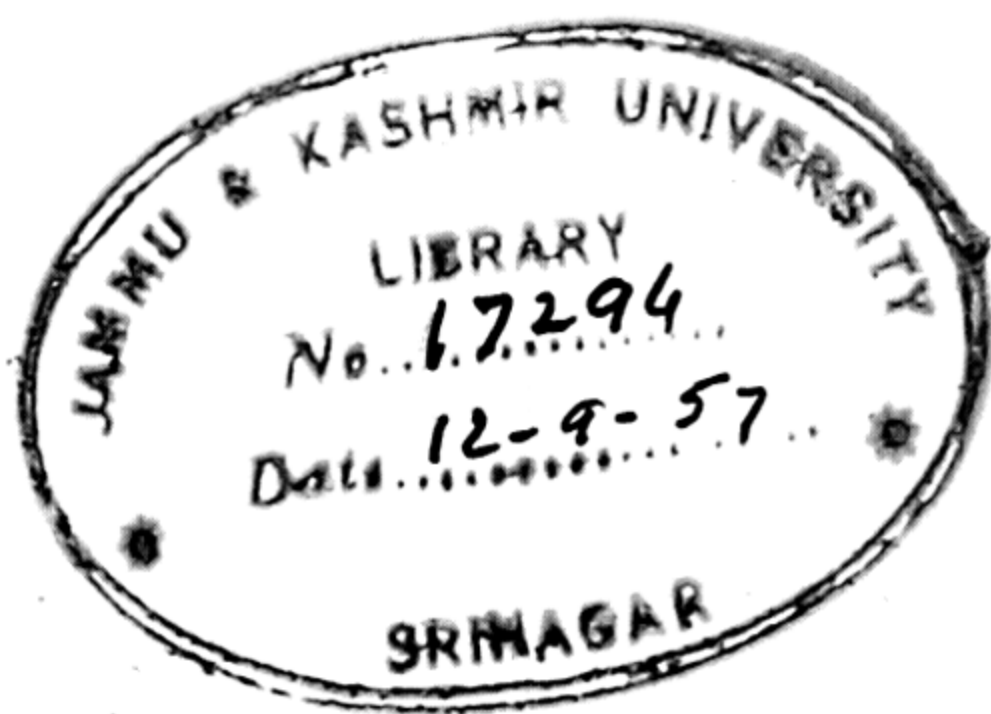






**PRESIDENT GAMAL ABDEL NASSER**







## FOREWORD

*by*

AHMED NAGUIB HASHIM

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Egypt has been the subject of hundreds of books by many foreign travellers, statesmen and historians, but little has come out in the English language from the pens of its own sons. Accordingly this small book written by five Egyptian scholars for the enlightenment of the English speaking readers, is a timely and useful brief history, fulfilling a long neglected need.

One of the distinctive characteristics of this little volume lies in the fact that each of its eminent contributors is well qualified by intimate study, scholarly training and personal experience to write about the period he has chosen, without being pedantic or sentimental.

In addition to a brief survey of political history, the authors have attempted to give a sketch of cultural and intellectual life in Egypt throughout the ages, so far as permitted by the narrow framework at their disposal. Within the compass of about 150

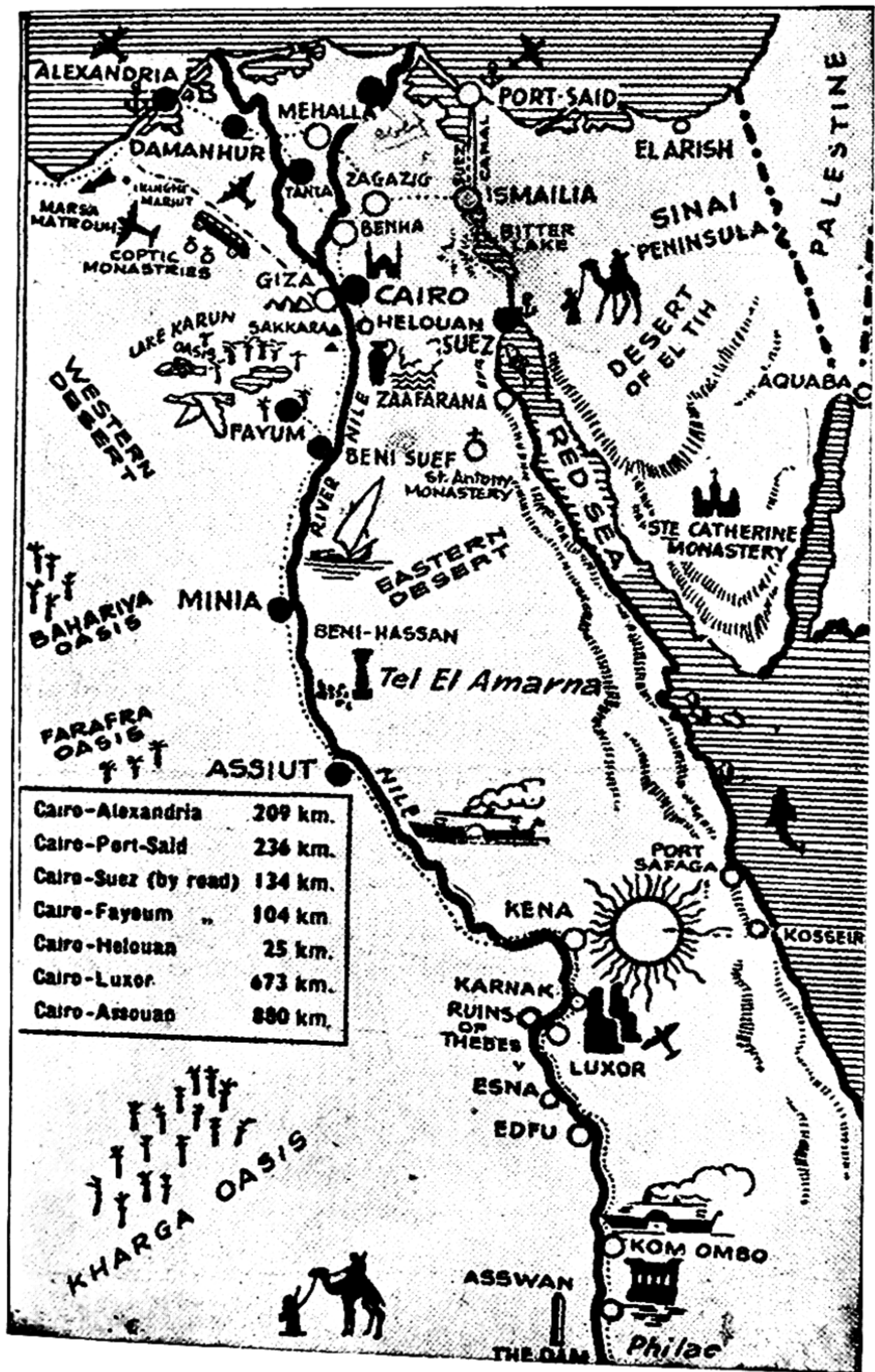
pages, they have successfully painted a panorama of Egypt from its misty beginnings in pre-historic times down to our own days, bringing into relief at the same time, the marvellous throb and drive of the life of the Egyptians, who, in the words of Dr. S. Huzayyin, "played their full part as a society which lived for itself as well as for the world."

It has been desirable to offer English readers interested in Egypt, a bird's eye view of the fortunes of its people and to provide them with a sound background that is essential for further study. In this way, "Historical Synopses" is an excellent introduction for the English reader to enjoy and profit by. It is to be hoped that more detailed studies about Egypt will be published in English by Egyptian scholars in the not too distant future.

Heliopolis,  
May, 1956.

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EGYPT



# **EGYPT AND THE NILE**

## **Reflections on the Past, the Present, and the Future**

*by*

**SULYMAN HUZAYYIN**

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### **Introductory: Egypt, not merely the gift of the Nile**

When Herodotus visited Egypt in the 5th century B. C., he went away with the impression that Egypt was the gift of the Nile. This is a broad statement which geographers have ever since adopted in their writings about the green strip of land that cuts through the desert-belt along the borders and in the delta of this great river. A closer study of conditions in Egypt, however, makes it necessary to qualify this statement of the classical traveller. There can be no doubt that the River Nile was and is still responsible, not only for the waters which make life possible in Egypt, but also for the rich alluvium which covers the bed of the valley and the delta. Yet a closer study of the history of man's activity in the lower Nile valley brings to light the importance of the rôle of the Nile



dwellers in shaping the pattern of their geographical environment. Let us look into the details of the geographical background of the interaction between man and the Nile, which was responsible for the rise and continuity of life and civilisation in the lower Nile Valley.

Geographically speaking, the River Nile is perhaps one of the most recent geographical features on the face of the earth. Yet its lower part became the seat of one of the earliest civilisations known in history. This civilisation became also characterised by a singular continuity all through the ages. Ever since man knew how to cultivate seeds in the lower Nile Valley towards the end of the sixth millenium B. C., the good land of Egypt was cultivated regularly every year down to the present day. In addition to this continuity, culture was regularly renewed through new additions and renovations which we shall try to review a little later.

This progressive continuity of life and civilisation in Egypt could not have been the result of sheer chance. It was built upon a number of fundamental phenomena, both natural and human. In its present form and dimensions, the River Nile does not go beyond the Middle Pleistocene, and in fact may not even be more than some 20,000 years old. Before that there were three

distinct river systems - in the equatorial plateau, in Abyssinia, and in Nubia and Egypt respectively. The latter system depended entirely on the local rainfall, during what we call the Pluvial Period - the equivalent of the Ice Age in Europe. During this Pluvial Period the northern system of the River Nile was highly developed. The bottom of the valley and its sides were filled with thick layers of gravel and sands brought from the eastern deserts of Egypt through what are now dry *wadis*. It is both interesting and significant that as the Pluvial Period was gradually approaching its closing stages, important earth movements and hydrographic changes were taking place in the upper reaches of the Nile, and as a result the waters of both the equatorial plateau and Abyssinia reached the Nubian and Egyptian valley. Abyssinia was the more important source, as from it came the seasonal inundations which brought the valuable mud. This light alluvium descending from the disintegrating volcanic surface of Abyssinia was spread in Egypt over the earlier beds of sand and gravel. The diminishing rainfall in Egypt made it possible for the mud to settle down, as there were no local torrents to wash it away into the Mediterranean. Thus the change of climate in Egypt at the end of the Pluvial Period made it possible for the soil of the Nile to settle down instead of being eroded away.

At the same time the fact that the deposition of sands and gravel preceded that of the Abyssinian mud, made it possible for the waters of the flood to percolate into the subsoil and drain away toward the sea. Thus the surface of the new soil in Egypt became largely free from swamps and marshes which would have otherwise formed on it. This was a very important feature of difference between Egypt and Iraq, where subsoil drainage was practically inexistent, and where the cultivated land could not maintain its fertility owing to the development of salts and marshes. We may, therefore, see how the sequence of events led to the formation of the good land of Egypt, and made it possible for the lower Nile Valley to become one of the earliest, if not the first, cradle-land for human settlement and agricultural civilisation.

But there were still other geographical features which contributed towards this end, and which made it possible for life to continue and develop along the borders of the Nile. We know that written history started in Egypt with the 1st Dynasty of the Pharaohs about 3200 B. C. But before that there was a long phase during which Egyptian society was gradually taking shape. We call it the predynastic period, and it covers some 10 to 15 centuries. Egyptian society was gradually learning to live in



unity along the borders of the Nile. The valley became a big school in which groups of settlers were gradually learning the art of local government and of united community. This was an interesting phase of human adjustment to the geographical environment, and the lesson which these early ancestors learnt from nature was never forgotten. The mighty River Nile had taught early societies the art of community life which still characterizes Egyptian rural society down to the present day. Let us recall that the seasonal flood of the River Nile was a source of common danger, because it meant irregular and often devastating inundation of all the land. To be able to settle in a village above the flood plains, it was necessary for those early settlers to build up a large artificial mound of earth in order to set up the houses on its crest. It was impossible for any small group or family to content itself with a small isolated mound on which to erect its habitation ; for such a small mound would have been easily swept away by the flood. Thus it was essential for the early settlers to live in large village communities where numbers of families had to cooperate and live together.

The common danger of the flood had also to be controlled through the erection of large and high banks all along the sides of the river bed. Neigh-

bouring villages had to cooperate amongst themselves for the erection of these high banks as well as for guarding them with vigilance during the flood season. This meant not only the initiation of cooperative efforts, but also the organization of the work and the rise of a system of administration and regional government. Thus the earliest stages of regional unity and local government were started along the banks of the Nile, long before they were known in other parts of the world.

But there was another incentive for unity and for the development of community life in early Egypt. We know that since very early times agriculture in Egypt was not of that primitive type which depended on rainfall. It was necessary, in order to cultivate the land of Egypt, to regulate the flow of water from the River Nile for irrigation. This meant the control of the waters of the River and the division of the plain and delta into what we call irrigation basins. It was necessary to build up large banks round each of those basins, into which the water could bring the silt. It was also necessary to dig large canals to lead the water from the River bed into the basin and out again after a certain amount of mud had settled down. The transformation of the land into basins and the digging of a large irrigation system was essential

for the development and upkeep of the agricultural land of Egypt. This meant a great community effort without which the River Nile would have flowed irregularly, changing its course and eroding the soil from one side to the other. In order to draw the benefit of regular irrigation from the Nile, a great and sustained effort had to be made by the early settlers in Egypt. Indeed the good land of Egypt, which became the cradle and seat of a highly developed agricultural life all through the ages, was the combined fruit of human work and a natural environment which was capable of being controlled. In other words this land was not the simple or easy gift of the River Nile. Organized work and unified efforts were as essential as the liberal supply of water and silt from the Nile. But the development of basins and the digging of canals were in themselves a great incentive for unity and for the development of early government and community life amongst those very early Egyptians. The same incentive continued to perform its rôle in Egyptian society down to the present day.

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## **Unity And Continuity : Two Features in The Life of Egypt :**

Thus we may well see how the environment of Egypt taught the Egyptians from very early times how to live in an organized and united community. In other words, it was not by mere chance that the first really large-scale government was first known in Egypt. The common source of danger from the flood, and the common source of benefit from irrigation, represented a regular annual feature which fostered unity. The River Nile also worked as a regular highway for communication between Lower and Upper Egypt. It is interesting to note that the river flowed from south to north — thus making it easy for the boats to sail downstream. At the same time the regular wind system was from the north — thus inspiring the early Egyptians to use the sail which helped in driving boats upstream. In other words the fact that the Nile flowed northward and regular winds came from the opposite direction represented two geographical features which complemented each other. Had the Nile flowed from the north, like the Tigris and the Euphrates, unity in ancient as well as historical Egypt would have been as difficult as that in Iraq — a land where a number of historic and separate civilisations developed in Sumer, Babylonia, Assyria and other basins.

The keynote of Egyptian life throughout history is the true adjustment and response of men to the call of unity. This unity, which nature itself taught the Egyptians, was essential not only for the maintenance of good government, but also for the good exploitation of the local resources of the good land of Egypt. It is interesting to note that periods during which this unity was maintained were characterized by great prosperity and development. On the other hand, periods of administrative disintegration were those of feudalism and decline in the life of the people of Egypt.

But the spirit of this natural unity was not only exemplified in the administrative system of a central government. It was also, and indeed is still, clearly exemplified in the life of the Egyptian rural communities. The village of the Egyptian countryside is an exceptionally good example of a community whose life is characterized by social cooperation and mutual help among its members. Features of social solidarity within the village group may be seen in the every day life of the Egyptian villagers. Signs of cooperation and mutual help mark the everyday activities of the inhabitants of our villages, who represent the mass of our people. Not only do they cooperate and exchange help and assistance in their work on the fields, but they also exchange help amongst themselves

within the village. When a villager, for example, is building a new house, the whole of the village comes to his assistance in the form of free work, if not of material. Gifts are also liberally exchanged on special occasions such as marriages, births and bereavements. These signs of solidarity represent some of the sources of strength in the life of the Egyptian community groups. It is these sources of strength which led to the continuity in the life of Egypt, and made the Egyptian society fit for survival right through the long centuries of its almost uninterrupted history.

## **The Rôle of The Desert**

Let us now pass on to another geographical feature in the environment which affected the life and history of the Egyptian society. The character and personality of Egypt were affected not only by the green valley but also by the bordering deserts. The rôle of these deserts, however, deserves a little more elaboration. Unlike the deserts and steppe-lands bordering the plains of Iraq, the deserts of Egypt were particularly dry. They maintained very few bedouin groups, and represented no immediate source of danger for the settled life of the irrigated lands of Egypt. There were no large communities of moving tribes who

could encroach upon the settled life of the villagers and change the social pattern of the country. In other words, the deserts of Egypt were so dry and so sparsely inhabited that they represented shields which protected the settled land of the valley, and helped it maintain its pattern of life. Let us contrast this with what happened on the plains of Iraq, where the settled land was often overrun by overwhelmingly large groups of bedouins who almost destroyed life on the cultivated lands of the Tigris and Euphrates. It is true that from time to time Egypt received invasions from east or from west; but these invasions always came in small groups which were readily assimilated by the Egyptian population, especially on the wide plains of the Delta. Indeed the deserts of Egypt were like sieves through which were able to percolate only the adventurous and hardy elements coming from the steppelands of North Arabia, or from the Libyan coastlands of the Mediterranean. Thus the deserts of Egypt did not shut it off entirely from the neighbouring world, but rather regulated its space-relationships by making it possible only for small groups to get through. These infusions from across the desert enriched Egypt with new adventurous elements which added to its blood heritage, but did not alter the racial pattern to any extent that would obliterate the local pattern of the



population. Similar infusions also came either from the heart of Africa and the Sudan along the River Nile, or from the opposite shores of the Mediterranean in Asia and South East Europe. Egypt became a nodal point which attracted elements from all directions; but only selected groups could finally reach this desired land. Its racial connections were on all sides, and with them also came relations of culture and civilisation. The deserts bordering Egypt helped this country to maintain its personality by never allowing the floods of racial migrations to overwhelm its settled land. The Mediterranean in the north also played a similar rôle.

### **Geographical Situation: Its Role In History.**

But the story of interaction between man and environment in Egypt can never be complete without due reference to the geographical situation of this great cradle of human civilisation. Within the whole of the Pharaonic period, space-relationships between Egypt and the outside world were limited to the neighbouring regions in Africa, Asia and Europe. Most of the Pharaonic period was characterized by peaceful relationships. The old kingdom of Egypt, for example, enjoyed some 700

years of constructive peace — an interval which no great civilisation ever seemed to have enjoyed. During that interval the Egyptians set the historic example of spending all their extra energy in building up great pyramids of stone, instead of dissipating that extra energy of their lives upon war. Even during the New Kingdom, when the Egyptians began first to defend their borders, and then, to build up an empire, they never extended their war relations beyond the Euphrates.

Humanity did not know about war as a world-wide phenomenon until the late days of the Greeks under Alexander the Great. Pharaonic Egypt can claim to have established a great civilisation in antiquity which was largely characterized by peaceful relationships, and never went beyond the stage of regional warfare. When Alexander the Great came, he was the first to take his troops from one political and cultural region to another, until he stirred up world opinion in what was really World War 1. in history. His troops passed from Greece to Asia Minor, the Levant, Egypt and Libya, back to Western Asia in Iraq and Ancient Iran, and then to Turkistan and the borders of the Ancient Chinese empire, before they went southwards to India and then back to Iran and Iraq. Thus for the first time in human history a number of cultural zones came into direct clash with each other. A world empire

was then born, though it was very short-lived. As a result of this world clash which covered the borders of three continents, the geographical situation of Egypt came to the fore-front. From that time onward, it became an important and often a determining factor in the life and history of Egypt and the Egyptians. During periods when Egypt was a prosperous land and maintained its unity and strength, its people knew how to utilize their geographical situation in linking up East and West, both in trade and in culture. During such phases the geographical situation of Egypt was a blessing for its people and a contributing factor in the development of peaceful relationships between East and West. During other phases, however, when outside elements tried to dominate the geographical situation of Egypt, this good corner-land was exploited by outsiders to build up world empires such as what happened under the Romans in classical times, the Turks in medieval times, or the British in our own times. Right through history, however, Egypt and the Egyptian people remained faithful to themselves and to the world as a whole. The spirit of Egypt based upon their faith in unity was reflected in their attitude towards the unity of the world and the eternal rôle of Egypt as the peaceful link between East and West. Thus in spite of foreign domination during

intervals since the war of Alexander the Great, Egypt never lost its own personality, and it continued to live its own life right through the ages. The new change in the story of Egypt as a result of the appearance of the idea of world unity was that Egypt became more and more conscious of its rôle as the focal point amidst the three great continents of the Old World.

**Egypt : a happy and progressive combination of the old and the new**

Let us elaborate this latter point in a little more detail. Egypt was a great and traditional cradle-land of human life and civilisation. Its culture was characterized both by its great antiquity and its almost uninterrupted continuity. In this respect Egypt differed from many other cradle-lands of civilisation; Let us recall that the cultures of ancient Sumer and Assyria, and those of ancient Greece and Rome all died away. On the other hand, the agricultural life of Egypt, together with its social and cultural pattern continued right through the ages. It is true there were ups and downs in Egyptian history, but the life and culture of the people of Egypt were never interrupted right to the present day. This is a sign of singular vitality and fitness for survival.



It is important at this stage to make a correction of an often-made statement - namely that the peasant society of rural Egypt is a conservative one. No statement is more vulnerable than this one. The peasants of the villages and fields of Egypt have constantly renewed the pattern of their work and life from period to period through their long history. There has been a constant renewal of the plants cultivated in Egypt, and the Egyptians have introduced new plants from time to time. Barley and wheat were known since Neolithic times, but clover was introduced only some 500 years ago. Flax was cultivated in Pharaonic times, but cotton was introduced on a large scale only in the early 19th century. African millet was known perhaps in late prehistoric times, but maize was introduced from America after its discovery, and cultivated extensively only less than 150 years ago. In recent times the Egyptian peasant has also taken to the cultivation of large numbers of new plants including fruit-trees introduced from South-East Asia, which added to the original fruit wealth of grapes, figs and other trees of the Mediterranean.

The Egyptian peasant also took new methods and tools of cultivation which added to his technical skill from time to time. The hoe was

known in prehistoric times, but the plough was first invented late in the Old Kingdom. The so-called shadoof was known since very early times and used for lifting water with buckets drawn by man power from canals, but the so-called sakkiah or water-wheel became known in Graeco-Roman times and was worked by animal power. About the same time the Archimedes screw became also known. In modern times the Egyptian peasants are becoming used to mechanical water-pumps which work side by side with the old methods. Walking through Egyptian fields one would also become impressed with the presence of modern tractors being used together with the old and traditional ploughs. We would not be justified, therefore, in taking the presence of the old and traditional methods as signifying conservatism, while ignoring the fact that the existence of the new methods should signify a progressive spirit. What seems to be paradoxical about the Egyptian countryside is the coexistence of some of the old and the new methods. This, however, should be explained in the light of the fact that some of our old methods became so well adapted to our conditions that it would be senseless and of no practical benefit to change them. The Egyptian peasant preferred to add the new progressive methods to some of the old ones which have proved fit to

survive. This led to a vast and progressive enrichment of our material heritage. We may mention, for example, that the modern tractor would be very useful for use on large fields but could not possibly replace the old plough on small strips of land, or even for special types of ploughing the earth. That is why our peasant finds it more useful and more practical to combine the old with the new. This is far from being conservative.

### **The Cultural Link in Space and Time**

The progressive spirit of the peasants of Egypt, which represents a most valuable asset for modern Egypt, is represented also in the cultural aspect of our life. The Egyptians have always been ready to adopt new attitudes and new types of culture. No people in history have suffered less from that inferiority complex vis-à-vis foreign cultures than the people of Egypt. It seems that the Egyptians who were amongst the earliest contributors to the development of human culture and civilisation have always felt so self-confident that they feared no danger of having their cultural pattern obliterated by borrowing from the outside world. Since the earliest stages of their history their cultural life and thought were based on the principle of give-and-take. Needless to add, this

is the only principle any people should follow if they were to become part and parcel of the cultural heritage of humanity as a whole. One of the main sources of strength in the life and culture of Egypt both in the past and in the present was the fact that it combined creation with adoption. In the Pharaonic phase Egypt gave freely many of its cultural traits to its hinterland in Africa. It also contributed immensely to the development of culture and civilisation in ancient Phoenicia and in Greece. At the same time it received and adopted many of the cultural elements evolved in the Semitic World. Later on, Egypt adopted the culture of Greece, and when this latter went on the downgrade, Alexandria became the seat of Greek thought and philosophy. Egypt mothered the culture of Greece, nourished it and preserved it until it was later on handed to the Arabs, who passed it on to the Western World. If it were not for Egypt, it would have been difficult for us to imagine how the survival of Greek heritage could have taken place. During the Alexandrian phase Egypt played the dual part of the creator and the fosterer of adopted culture. When Christianity appeared, Egypt adopted one of its branches and became the seat of the well-established Coptic Church, which spread the faith as far as Abyssinia. Later on Islam appeared and gradually infiltrated



into Egypt. The traditional cradle readily took to the new Arab pattern of culture, and Cairo — instead of Alexandria — became the new seat of adoption. Al-Azhar — the mosque and university — became the great world centre of Islamic learning, and played the traditional rôle of the school of Alexandria. Again the great progressive spirit of Egypt was manifested in a magnificent way. Egypt became one of the great centres of Arab and Islamic civilisation, and the Egyptians took readily to the new change, and played their part of creation and adoption in the field of the new culture. But this world rôle of Egypt did not end with the Arab and Islamic phase. In modern times Egypt is again performing the same rôle which it played in history as the link between East and West. Let us recall that Egypt was the first Eastern and Islamic country to get into direct contact with the West. The expedition of Napoleon at the close of the 18th century represented a sudden blow which the West gave to the East. The clash which led to the awakening of Egypt was a prelude to the awakening of the East.

The Egyptian people were again very quick to respond to the shock of the blow, and to rise from the dormant phase of Turkish domination. The revival of Modern Egypt in the 19th and 20th

centuries was marked not only by a great development in agriculture and perennial irrigation but also by a magnificent revival in the field of culture. Egypt was the first Eastern and Islamic land to adopt Western technique and to introduce Western learning and thought. Unlike what happened in some other Eastern and Islamic countries, modern Egypt was able to achieve a happy inter-marriage of the traditional and the new patterns of thought and culture. This was in line with what happened again and again throughout our long history. Egypt renovated its system of education; and in spite of foreign occupation it was able to build up modern universities and centres of learning. The westernization of our education, however, did not overwhelm our originality, or obliterate our national pattern. On the other hand, we were able to assimilate Western patterns. At the same time, Egypt became the gateway through which Western ideas penetrated and spread both southward into the Sudan and eastward into Western Asia. Again Cairo and Alexandria were destined to play their traditional rôle as centres of creation and transmission of culture and thought.

## **Concluding Reflections On The Future.**

Let us conclude these notes with some reflections on the future. We have already tried to put our finger on some of the fundamental sources of strength in the life and thought of the Egyptian society through the ages. The Egyptians represented a people who lived in a most propitious environment. This environment was most suitable as a cradle-land for a settled and continuous civilisation. The Nile was the father and giver of life in this arid land, but it needed great and sustained efforts on the part of its sons to put it under control and prevent it from being a devastating inundator. The same effort was necessary to draw the full benefits from the land and water of the Nile. The life and civilisation of Egypt were therefore the result of the combination of a suitable environment with a vigilant and hardworking human community. If this were true of the past, it certainly is equally true of the present and the future. But the Egyptians, in their history, did not work or live entirely for themselves. The culture which they evolved and nourished became part of the human heritage as a whole. It was based on the principle of give-and-take. No spirit of egoism prevented the Egyptians from giving the fruit of their historic efforts to the world; and no complex

of inferiority prevented them from borrowing freely from the fruits of other peoples. The Egyptians therefore played their full part as a society which lived for itself as well as for the world. They keynote of their history was the peaceful exploitation of their geographical situation during periods when that situation was not dominated by aggressors from without. Being in the centre of the world, they adopted new cultures from the East and the West with which they enriched their own civilisation as well as the heritage of humanity as a whole. It was most fortunate that the Egyptians were able to combine their pride in the cultural past with a splendid open mindedness and a progressive spirit which enabled them to renew their culture from time to time.

At the present day, Egypt stands at the dawn of a new era of its long history. It was natural that this long history was characterized by phases of dormancy and others of revival and activity. Phases of dormant activity never meant death for Egyptian life and civilisation, as they did in the case of other lands. From time to time the latent vitality of the Egyptian people would flare up in the form of a big movement of revival. This is what is happening in Egypt of today. The Revolution which took place in 1952 should not be



taken as a movement which started in a section of the community, but rather as a sign of the awakening spirit of the Egyptian people. This is indeed why the people felt that the movement which started within a small group was their own and represented a turning point in their history. This is also why the Revolution quickly took a social, an economic and a cultural aspect which was much more crucial than the political aim of changing a decadent regime. The social reform meant the end of feudalism and the revival of the community-spirit of traditional Egypt. Economic development was essential for the uplift of the standard of living through a fuller exploitation of our natural resources. In the field of culture Egypt of today and of the Revolution is again trying to play its traditional rôle in human history. Not only are we trying to foster the cultural revival in Egypt, but we are also doing all we can to help a wider revival in the whole of the Arab world. Some 1700 teachers are being sent as cultural ambassadors to the whole of the Arab world, and over 5000 Arab students are receiving free education in the institutes and universities of modern Egypt. We know that we cannot spare those teachers, for they are all needed for the expansion of the educational movement to meet our requirements for the present day and the near

future. We know that we could have used the places occupied by Arab students in our schools and universities for widening the opportunities of education for our own youth. But Egypt of the present day and of the future realises its duty towards the neighbouring world. Perhaps it is a good sign that in this phase of national revival the impulse to « give » is more dominant over our actions than the urge to « take ». This is a reflection of the spirit of historic Egypt which built its glory in the past upon the principles of peace and generosity. It is gratifying to feel that this spirit of Egypt is being met with a ready response on the part of the whole of the Arab world in Asia and in Africa. Let us hope that this spirit of mutual and peaceful cooperation in the field of culture and thought would find its echo in wider and wider circles in more distant lands.





# **SPOTLIGHTS ON ANCIENT EGYPTIAN HISTORY**

*by*

**AHMED FAKHRY**

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## **1. — Introduction.**

Let us imagine Egypt about 3200 B. C., and think of it as a country whose Nile banks were lined with vast swamps, and whose people lived in larger communities, and acquired an advanced knowledge of agriculture, and of how to dig and maintain canals. They had evolved a workable calender, and they knew also how to build houses, work metal, weave linen; but more than anything else, they were literate, and were already recording their documents on stones and other materials.

## **2. — Archaic Period.**

A long time before that date, Egypt had been devided into forty-two geographical units, called nomes or provinces, twenty-two of which were in Upper Egypt, while in the Delta there were twenty nomes, which constituted Lower Egypt ; and each of these two parts of the country considered itself as an independant realm. Whether there



was a union of these two kingdoms prior to that of the First Dynasty or not, we cannot be sure, but when the time came for the curtain of history to be lifted, we find on the stage a traditional king whose name is Mena, to whom the Egyptians attributed the union of the Two Lands, and whom they considered to be the founder of the First Dynasty. His original home was in the South, at Thinis, near Abydos, and this town gained much prominence, and became the Capital of the whole united land. But tradition goes further and tells that, later, Mena founded a northern capital at the apex of the Delta, where the Two Lands join, and called it « White Wall ». The place which he chose was a most suitable one for a capital, and was later to be known as Memphis.

The kings of the first two dynasties built their monuments either near their home at Thinis, or in the cemetery of the new capital, at the place now called Sakkara. At both places they built great rectangular brick tombs, which Egyptologists, now call Mastabas, and although these tombs were robbed in ancient, and in comparatively modern times, enough was left in them to allow archaeologists to tell that the country was already on its way to great days, and that the Egyptians were rapidly making great progress. They were using stone in the interior construction of the brick mastabas, but coming to the threshold of the Third Dynasty, we find a remarkable change taking place.



Ancient History inscribed on the Walls of the temples.



### 3. — Zoser and Imhotep.

A certain King by the name of Zoser came to the throne, and founded the Third Dynasty. He decided to make the Northern Capital the official one throughout all the kingdom, and he came to live at the « White Wall ». For the good luck of Egypt, there lived at that time a young man, by the name of Imhotep, whose genius raised him from the position of a simple clerk to that of the great Director of Works all over the land, and he became the first man after the King himself. His wisdom and his great knowledge of medicine and other sciences immortalized him in Egyptian tradition, and two thousand years after his death, he was deified by the Egyptians, and was worshipped in splendid temples built in his honour, and was identified by the Greeks with Asklepios, the God of Medicine. Zoser recognized the ability of this man, honoured him, and gave him his support, and Imhotep achieved many things unheard of before his time. Most important of his deeds was the introduction of a new method of building and a new type of tomb. Up till the reign of Zoser, royal and private tombs were simply rectangular mastabas built of mud-brick, but Imhotep used hewn stone blocks instead of bricks. He kept on changing the plan of Zoser's tomb, adding one mastaba on top of another, always decreasing in size, and the result was a step pyramid of six stages. Zoser was buried under this pyramid, and



in the galleries surrounding his burial-chamber were placed many thousands of vases of alabaster and other costly stones. Those found till now number not less than thirty thousand, and there are still other galleries yet to be excavated. Around the Step Pyramid at Sakkara Imhotep built a number of other monuments, which were no doubt stone copies of brick constructions used in certain royal ceremonies. In this work, Imhotep introduced the use of columns and piers, the beauty of which was highly esteemed by the Ancient Egyptians throughout all their history, and which we still admire until the present day.

Zoser was followed by King Sekhem-khet, who started to build another Step Pyramid near that of his predecessor, but the work of this monument was of a much inferior quality, and it was never finished. This is the newly-found pyramid, which was announced in the Press last summer.

#### **4. — Snefru and the Fourth Dynasty.**

For the remainder of the Third Dynasty the Egyptians continued to follow the traditions of Imhotep, but made no further progress in building until another able man seized the reins of power, and founded a new royal house. This was King Snefru, the first King of the Fourth Dynasty. Unfortunately, we do not know the name of his

architect, but now we see for the first time the attempt to build a true pyramid. We see the first experiment in that majestic monument which is generally called the « Bent Pyramid » of Dahshûr. The construction of this pyramid shows the uncertainties of the architects in this first attempt at building a true pyramid, but we can see that they quickly came to understand the nature of the problems that beset them, and at less than one mile to the north of the Bent Pyramid, they erected another and perfect pyramid. It was there at Dahshûr, that lonely spot south of Sakkara, that the architects learned the great lessons in stone architecture and statuary, the results of which can be seen in the Great Pyramid of Giza and the surrounding monuments of the period.

#### **5. — The Private Life in the Old Kingdom.**

The standard of private life, as well as minor arts, also made great progress. The best evidence can be seen in the objects from the tomb of Queen Hetepheres, the mother of Khufu, which were discovered in 1926 by the Boston-Harvard Expedition, and from the temples of Snefru, which have been coming to light since 1950 onwards.

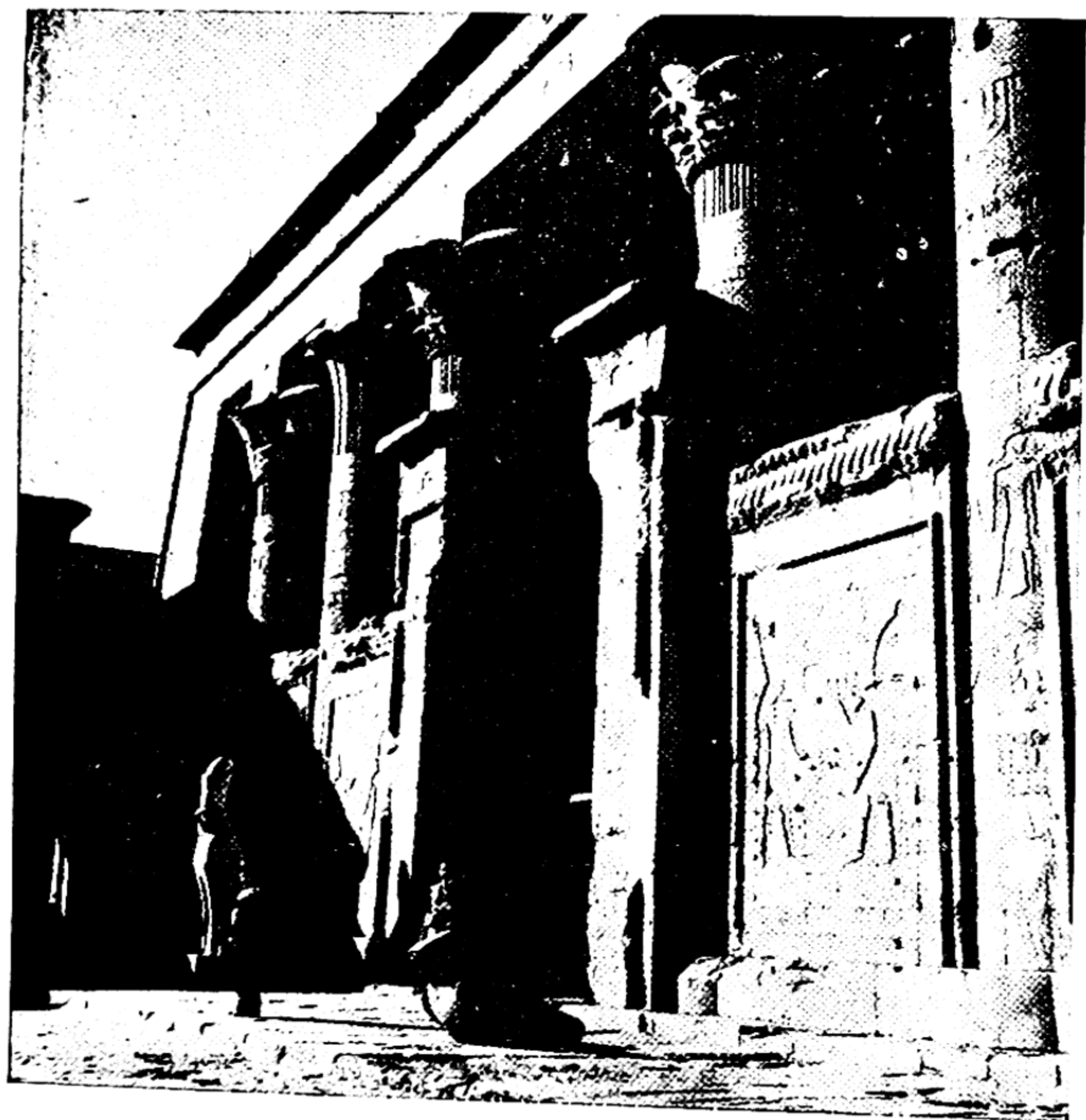
Details of the private life of the Egyptians of the Old Kingdom can be examined on the walls of the tombs at Giza and Sakkara, and there we find the owners inspecting the work of the fields,

and looking at their own workshops, where goldsmiths, cabinet makers, stone cutters and other artisans ply their crafts. In other scenes we find the gentleman and his family out hunting, fishing or fowling, and other scenes show him entertaining his guests at a banquet, while singers, dancers and musicians add to the beauty and gaiety of the parties.

In those days the kings were considered to be divine, and had unlimited power over the people. But changing factors in society gradually curtailed their power, and gave rise to new ideals and the spread of other religious beliefs. We cannot tell if it was due to the changing mentality of the country or to the lack of able rulers, but there came the day when the local officials in the provinces began to gain power, and became semi-independent.

## **6. — The Social Revolution and the First Intermediate Period.**

At last the time came when the whole construction of the State collapsed, and a great social revolution broke out, and a period of anarchy prevailed. We read the sad descriptions of the state of the country in some of the papyri which have come down to us, and learn from them how the palaces were pillaged by the mobs and how their occupants were thrown into the streets. The great ladies of the time were begging for charity, while



Al Karnak Temple.





their maidservants were sitting in their palaces. It was a real revolution, and it continued for some time; the lack of a central power allowed the frontiers to be invaded, and many of the sages were looking forward to the coming of the day when the land would be again united under the control of a strong ruler. At last that day dawned, and the dream became a fact.

## **7. — The Middle Kingdom**

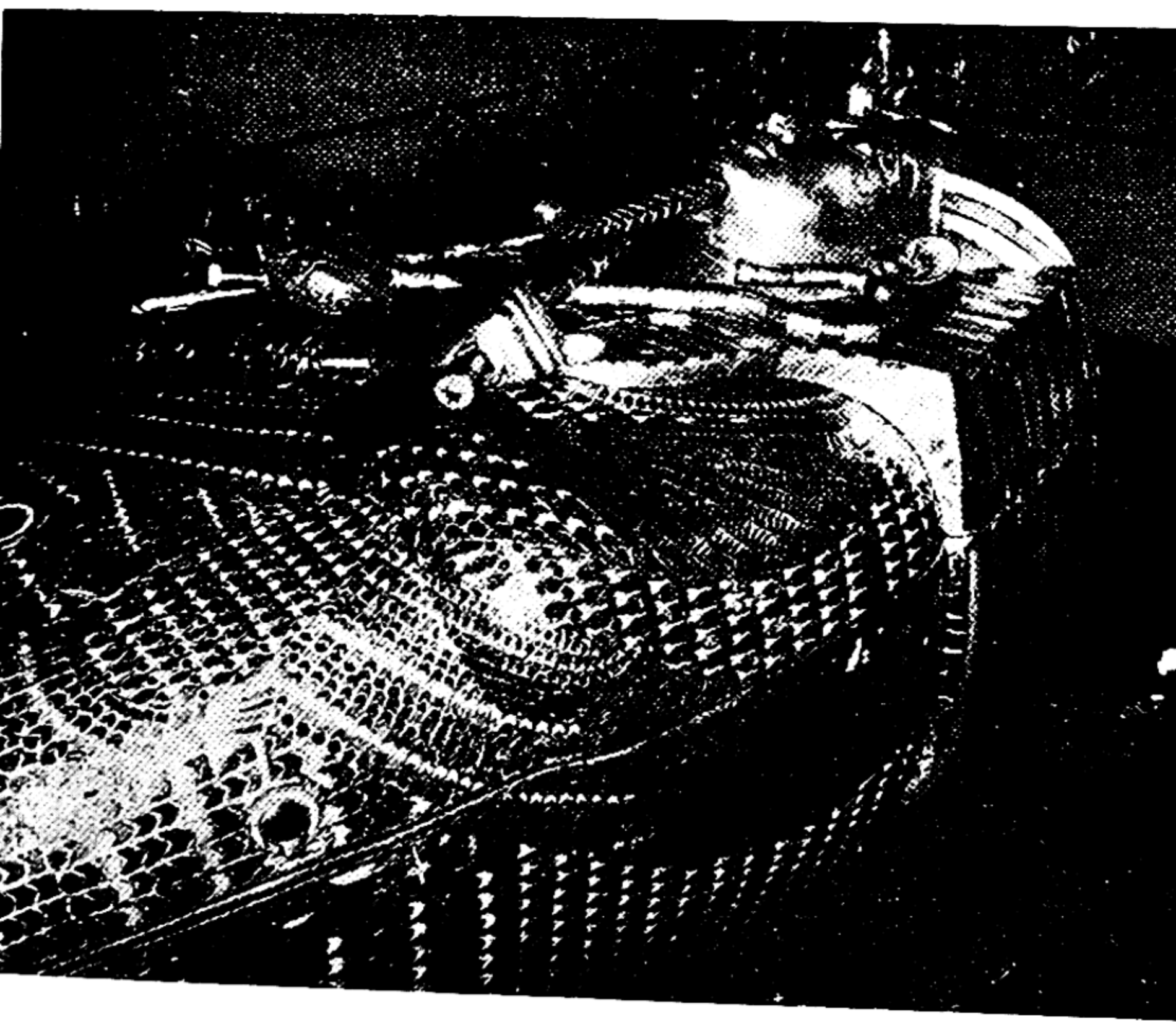
An able man of a southern origin, named Amenemhat I, founded the Twelfth Dynasty, and opened the period which we now call the Middle Kingdom. It is a fact that during the Old Kingdom, Egypt had been more or less in a state of isolation. It had certain commercial relations with lands to the immediate south, east and west, and its fleet ventured from time to time on the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, as far as the coast of Phoenicia. But this was always on a limited scale. Since the time of the Middle Kingdom Egypt could not live alone, and there began a kind of wider relationship with the surrounding countries. The Pharaohs of that period found it their duty to push their southern frontiers further back. But the two greatest problems confronting Egypt at that time were the increasing population, and the need to find a new source of national revenue. For the first of

these problems the kings of the Twelfth Dynasty began a great scheme for the reclamation of some of the marshy lands surrounding the Fayoum lake, and putting them under cultivation. They also stored some of the surplus water of the inundation there, to be used for irrigation. For the second problem, they facilitated commerce by constructing a canal that connected the Mediterranean with the Red Sea, by means of a canal connecting the latter with the Nile; this was the forerunner of the Suez Canal.

The kings of this dynasty continued to build pyramids, and the whole population of the country flourished. There is no doubt that there was a decline in architecture, when compared with the great works of the Fourth Dynasty, but there were other arts and crafts that had made great progress. Any visitor to the Cairo or Metropolitan Museums cannot fail to admire the great collections of jewellery from that period, the taste and workmanship of which rival that of our best modern jewellers.

## **8.—The Hyksos Period**

Again, for some reason or other, there was another breakdown, followed by a foreign invasion, in which the country suffered great humiliation. That foreign occupation, which is now called the



Tut Ankh Amoun.





Hyksos Period, lasted for a century, but when the time came, Egypt knew how to avenge herself. The great movement for independance started again from the south; this time the Princes of Thebes refused to continue in submission to the foreigners, and waged war against them. After more than one battle, the day came when the capital of the Hyksos was captured, and they were driven out of the country and retired to Palestine. Ahmes I and his army followed them there, as he knew that unless he uprooted the enemy from Egypt's borders, the country could never know security. After besieging the Hyksos stronghold, Sharuhén, in Palestine, for three years, the Egyptians invested the city and wiped out the entire Hyksos garrison. It seems that Egypt's revenge was so thorough that the name of the Hyksos was wiped out for ever as a nation from the pages of history. Those Egyptian soldiers who left the provincial capital of Thebes, swearing to win or die, did not return home before fulfilling their vows and freeing their country. They even did more than that, for they did not return home to Thebes before laying the foundations of a great Egyptian Empire in Asia, which lasted for more than five hundred years.

### **9.—The Empire and the Glory of Thebes**

With the foundation of the glorious Eighteenth Dynasty began the period called the New King-

dom. One great warrior-king succeeded another, all of them pushing the frontiers further to the south, east and north. The Mediterranean and the Red Sea had become two Egyptian lakes, under the reign of Thutmose III, the greatest warrior, administrator and statesman that the ancient East had ever seen. Tribute poured into Thebes from all parts of the Empire, and gold was lavished on building great monuments all over the land. Thebes, the Capital of the Empire, received the greatest attention, and expanded until it earned the famous name of «Hundred-gated Thebes». The walls of the private tombs of Thebes are covered with paintings which disclose to our eyes the great civilization of that period, and the luxury in which the Egyptians lived. But beside the scenes of wars and the figures of players and artisans, and the religious scenes dealing with life in the Hereafter, there are other representations which add greatly to the importance of these tombs. Every year delegations from all parts of the known world flocked to Thebes, bringing with them the tribute of their lands to offer their submission and homage to the great Pharaoh. And on the walls of some of the tombs of the high officials these people and their presents are depicted. We see Sudanese, Libyans, Palestinians, Lebanese, Syrians and the people of Asia Minor, the Upper Euphrates

as well as those of Cyprus, Crete and the Islands of the Mediterranean, all depicted in their gay national costumes, and with them the productions of their lands. In the greater part of their countries there are no monuments surviving from that period, and consequently the Theban tombs stand as the only source for the study of the civilizations of the ancient world.

### **10.— Private Life in the New Kingdom**

In those days people lived gay and joyous lives, revelling in banquets and entertainments. The artists of the time found great pleasure in depicting the various incidents that met their eyes. Now and then they show us a lady who got drunk at a feast and a man carried home unconscious from a banquet. In one of the tombs a lady guest shouts to a servant to bring her eighteen cups of beer because she feels that her throat is as dry as straw ! People still believed in their deities, and the kings trusted in them to be their protectors in war, and nothing could be done without their aid. They spent lavishly upon them, and records still remain of great quantities of gold which the kings presented to the temples, as well as land, herds and slaves. Some of the temple doors were plated with gold and copper and their floors were formed of silver and other precious materials.



The visitor to Thebes wanders from temple to temple, not knowing which to admire most. On the western bank of the river, near the private tombs, he can visit the beautiful temple of Queen Hatshepsut, and several others. But his admiration runs very high when he stands in the shadow of the walls of the Temple of Luxor, or finds himself lost in that incomparable monument, the great Temple of Amon at Karnak. These monuments are a real record of Egypt's history, and every stone and inscription which we see is a sentence or a phrase in that great volume.

## **II. — Akhenaton and Monotheism**

Egypt was still at the zenith of her glory when something happened, and there came to the throne a dreamer and a philosopher instead of a warrior. This was the famous Akhenaton, husband of the beautiful Queen Nefertiti. Akhenaton refused to continue to worship the ancient Gods, especially Amenré, and he wished to promote the worship of the Aton, the power in the sun-disk, and to make from it the sole deity of the Empire. There was a great struggle between him and the priests, and he had to leave Thebes and found a new capital at Tell el Amarna, in Middle Egypt. There are many people who accuse Akhenaton of having wrecked Egyptian Imperial life and weakened the Empire;

but those people forget that we have from his period those priceless ideals expressed in his hymns and universal monotheism for all the inhabitants of the earth regardless of race or colour. His hymns affected the literature of the Ancient East, especially that of the Hebrews, and Psalm 104 is more or less a copy of Akhenaton's great hymn to Aton. This idealist also emancipated Egyptian artists from the iron rules of ancient tradition, bidding each man paint nature as he beheld it. Some of the masterpieces of Egyptian art date from this period, both in painting and sculpture. And though artists were shortly to return again to the old, traditional style, yet the lingering echoes of the « Amarna Style » lent to the traditional art a grace and softness that it had never before possessed.

But this religious and artistic movement of Akhenaton did not last long, and after a reign of ten years, he died, and his weak successors could not continue. Tutankhamon, who married the second daughter of Akhenaton, was only a child when he came to the throne, and, submitting to the priests of Amon, came back to Thebes. Now the country was in need of a strong man, but the royal family was corrupt, and was unfit to take the step. A general of the army found that it was his duty to restore law and order; this man was the

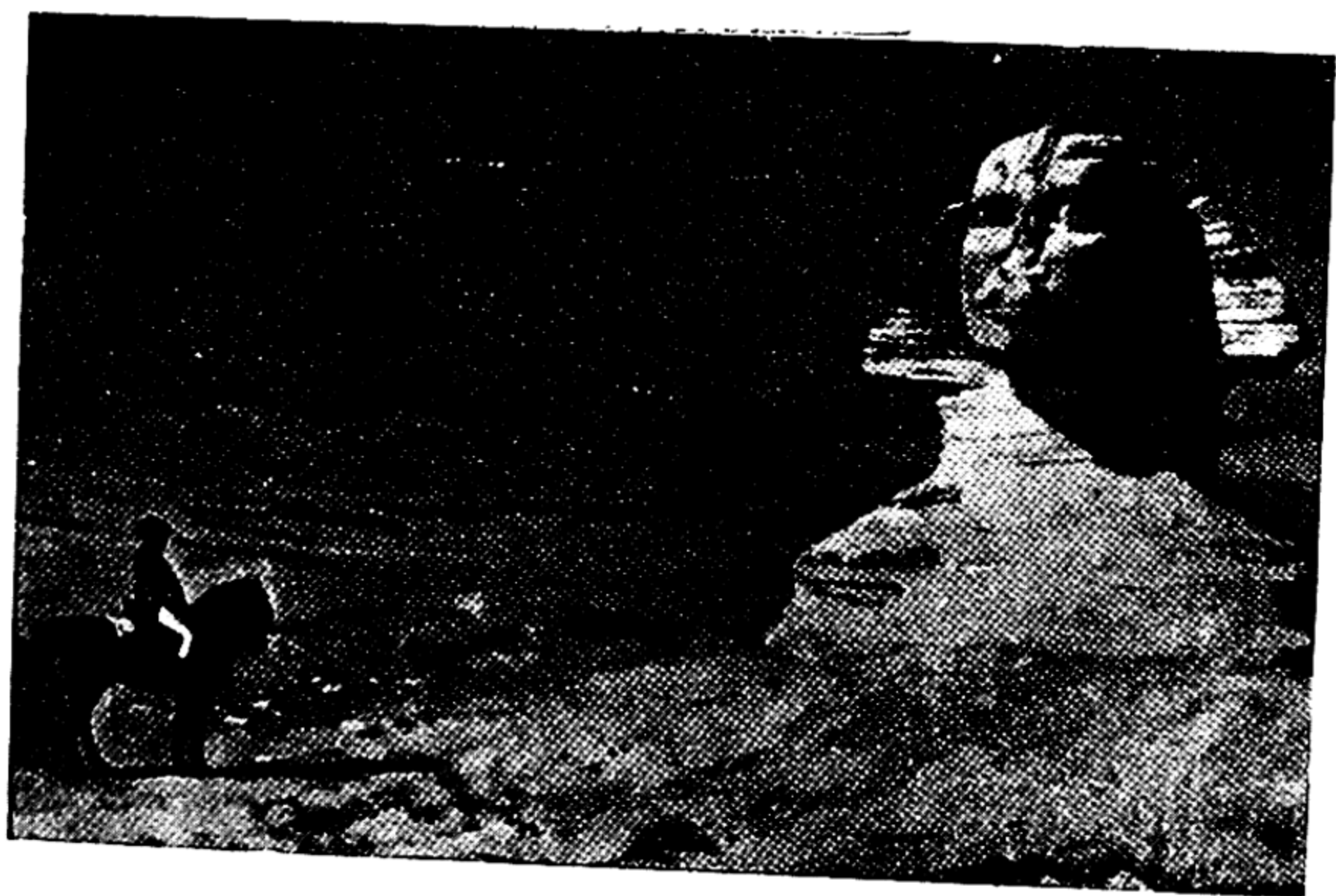
great Haremheb, whose reign ends the Eighteenth Dynasty.

## **12.—The Last Days of the Empire**

Egypt continued to produce great men who were able to confront the rising powers of the Hittites and the Assyrians in the East. We read in the history of Egypt great names like those of Sety I and Ramesses II, who vowed themselves to restore the great Empire of their illustrious ancestor, Thutmose III. But the world was changing, and new factors were beginning to appear on the stage of history. Egypt was confronted by many unexpected enemies. There were Indo-European tribes coming down from the mountains of Asia who were affecting the destiny of the ancient world. This pressure was felt everywhere for some centuries; and we can connect the appearance of the « Sea People » of the Mediterranean with this pressure. Egypt fought the battle gallantly. The last of her great warriors, Ramesses III, fought on land and sea, and immortalized his victories on the walls of his temple at Medinet Habu at Thebes, where we see the first recorded clash in Egyptian history between Egypt and Europe.

## **13.—Help Comes from the South**

After the Twentieth Dynasty Egypt fell a prey to some of her enemies, and at one time,



Napoléon in front of the Sphinx





King Piankhi, who was ruling at Napata, near the Fourth Cataract, decided to invade the North to restore order and again unite the Nile Valley. The successors of Piankhi wished to regain Egypt's old power in Asia, but the rising might of Assyria rendered their efforts in vain.

#### **14.—The Revival**

A little later, Egypt rose again to her feet and founded the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, which is called the Renaissance. During the reign of this family, Egypt looked backwards to the ancient days of her history, and imitated and revived many of the traditions and customs as well as the art forms of the Old Kingdom. This may have been some kind of re-action against the increasing influence of Greek culture.

Egyptologists are not very modest in calling the history of Egypt since those days the « Late Period », as though Egypt was growing old, and was on her way to decay. But the Egyptian spirit had never died out, and when we read carefully the history of those times, and study the documents of the Ptolemaic Period, we cannot help feeling that it was always the Egyptian spirit that was directing the destiny of the country, even under the shadow of Imperial Rome. The Roman armies were terrorizing the whole world, and Egypt

fought hard, and as we see in the story of that wonderful woman, Cleopatra, that the Egyptian spirit was always high.

### **15.— Cleopatra**

When the great Queen knew that she was losing, she preferred to die as a proud daughter of the Nile, rather than live on as a vassal of Rome or grace the triumph of Augustus Ceasar. When Cleopatra died, and her maidens took poison to follow her to the grave, their cries of agony attracted the attention of one of the Roman officers who were stationed to guard them. When he rushed upstairs, he found that Cleopatra was already dead, and was seated on her throne, wearing all her regalia. As she died, she leaned to one side and her crown was tilted on her head. One of the dying girls rose to straighten it, and furiously the officer shouted at her « Is it well, what your Mistress has done ? », and the girl answered, « Yes it was well done, and befitting the descendant of so many great kings ».

### **16.— Christian Times**

But after the death of Cleopatra, Egypt still continued to exist, and it was only one generation later that something happened which was destined to affect not only the history of Egypt, but the

history of the whole world. Not very far from the eastern frontiers of Egypt, in the land of Palestine, which had always been influenced by Egyptian culture, there was born a child who was to revive all the good, ancient teachings and ideals.

## 17. — Epilogue

Now I should like to make room for my colleague, Prof. Atiyya, to continue the story, but before giving him the word, I want only to mention that Egypt has always been the same, whether it is the Egypt of the Pharaohs, worshipping her ancient Gods in the great temples where the names of Amon, Re' and Osiris were invoked in hymns, or the Egypt in whose churches were glorified the names of God and Christ, or the Egypt from whose minarets sounds forth the name of Allah. Its people are the same, and in their veins runs the blood of their ancestors, who taught the world the essentials of their civilisation and who built the great pyramids. The Nile still flows as it did for thousands of years, and as long as this mighty river flows, and the Egyptians live on its banks, the old Egyptian spirit will never die, but will continue to flourish and play its part in world history.





## CHRISTIAN EGYPT

*by*

**Prof. Dr. AZIZ SURYAL ATIA**

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Only those who visit Egypt can fully appreciate the charm of its history. Only those who witness the different aspects of this endless sequel of centuries are able to enjoy the pleasure of living in a past which is present and even future at one time. Nobody can even describe the feeling which fills the heart at the sight of a gaudy temple like that of Karnak in Luxor : so ancient and yet so alive that it makes a part of our every day actuality. And right in the heart of this sanctuary of old style paganism, we find two tiny churches : one of them goes back to the pre-theodosian era, when churches were catacombs; and the other is a primitive basilica. And not far from this last Christian sanctuary there stands a small mosque glittering with its white wash amidst the sombre ruins. Thus in this small area on which the Karnak temple is situated we have side by side, three ideologies which seem so far from one another but a bit of Egyptian soil brings them so near to each other

that they seem one and the same thing, or better said, three episodes of the eternal search of man after divinity.

Through the previous pages, my colleague Doctor Fakhry had given us a masterful bird's eye-view of ancient Egypt. Thirty centuries were cleverly condensed in a couple of pages. To me falls the privilege of taking you over from the times of the last of the Pharaohs to the advent of Islam to Egypt : A period of nine centuries which looks so short in comparison with that of Pharaonic or Muslim Egypt. But it is particularly significant as regards the value, the depth, and the meaning to Egypt's national history and the human history in general.

We have three Egypts to deal with through those nine centuries : Ptolemaic or Greek Egypt, Roman Egypt and Byzantine or Christian Egypt. As it is hardly possible to deal adequately with those three different eras of our history, I shall concentrate on the most telling of those three episodes of our history. I mean Christian Egypt.

The original meaning of the word « Copt » is « Egyptian ». That does not imply that Moslems are not Egyptians. But the word « Copt » itself is derived from the Greek word « Aegyptus » meaning

as the Christian Egyptians. This is based on the fact that in the year 64 A.D. St. Mark preached the Gospel of Christ in Alexandria, and since that year Christianity spread like fire throughout the country for reasons which cannot be discussed in detail now, but can be given only in their barest outline.

The Egyptian is and has always been religiously minded. The ancient Egyptian's searching mind was always soaring over the domain of religion and ultimately arrived at certain tenets, at certain teachings which were later identified with the theory and sublime teachings of the Christian religion.

Let me give you some concrete illustrations. In the first place, you get the idea of the oneness of God, during the time of King Akhnaton who lived about 1500 years before Christ. The idea of the Trinity has its parallel in the ancient Egyptian triads of which the most famous was that of Osiris, Isis, and Horus. It was that triad which gave the Egyptians the stepping stone towards the understanding of the Christian Trinity : the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Baptism as well found an equivalent in the washing by holy water. The conception of the Cross as the representation of the celestial and eternal life had also



existed in ancient Egypt in the form of the « Ankh » sign. Whenever you see a figure on one of the temples carrying the « Ankh » or the ancient Egyptian cross in his hand, then you realize at once that there was an ancient God. In other words, the Cross became the symbol of eternal life in both Christianity and the ancient Egyptian religion. Even more striking still is the idea of the resurrection, so Christian and so Egyptian in common. In reality, life after death may be considered as one of the basic ideas at the very root of ancient Egyptian civilization. Those great pyramids just outside Cairo as well as the tombs of the Valley of the Kings were constructed, and the bodies of Egyptian monarchs were embalmed and surrounded by fabulous luxuries in order to enable the Pharaohs to enjoy themselves when their souls returned to their bodies in the world beyond.

Bearing in mind all those factors and circumstances, there is no wonder that the Egyptians or Copts accepted Christianity so very rapidly that the Romans had to exercise a series of persecutions, an attempt to suppress the growth of a religion which openly defied the divinity of the emperor, I shall not enter into the history of these persecutions. But it was in the midst of the tumult of execution and torture that Egypt's Church flourished beyond recognition until it assumed its

definitive form in the course of the second century. In other words, the third century saw the Coptic Church with a great hierarchy ranging from the Patriarch in Alexandria down to the modest priest and the monks who lived out in the Eastern and Western Deserts. The rise of this great hierarchy coterminously with the Roman persecutions resulted in the identification of the Coptic people with their own Church of Alexandria. This tradition persisted and even became more prominent when, in a subsequent age and for other reasons, the Byzantines resuscitated Coptic persecutions.

For a given period, however, the differences of the Romans and the Egyptians, of the Byzantines and the Copts, slumbered and became latent after the Edict of Milan (313) whereby Constantine the Great declared Christianity the official religion of the state. This period may be defined as the age of the Oecumenical Councils which set the basis of the Christian Creed. Here, the role of the Copts was supreme, and their theological and philosophical contributions to Christian doctrine and dogma was unsurpassed. The oecumencial movement began with the Council of Nicaea (325) and ended with the Council of Chalcedon (451). The Council of Nicaea was presided over by Constantine and the Copts were represented in the assembly by their patriarch Alexandrus who was aided by

a young man in his twenties by the name of Athanasius. At a later date, he became Coptic Patriarch himself and earned the title of Athanasius the Great. In his successive exiles from Alexandria, he preached at the papal Curia in Rome and spread Coptic ideas during his peregrinations in Gaul and Germany. His contributions of Patristic literature in numerous tombs have stood the test of time. As a younger man, he was the first person responsible for the formulation of the text of the creed of the Christian religion at Nicaea.

This leads us up to another point. Alexandria during the fourth and fifth centuries became the seat of Christian learning throughout the whole world. You know that the Ptolemies, more especially Philadelphus the second of the line, collected millions of scrolls of papyrus which included all the knowledge of the ancients and stored them in the *Museon* or the great Library of Alexandria. The *Museon* grew to be a kind of academy or university or center of studies of ancient scholarship. In direct succession to it during the first few centuries of the Christian era, arose the famous Catechetical School of Alexandria which was identified with such illustrious names as Pontinus, the great Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and others



St. George's Church — Old Cairo





who put the Christian creed on a philosophical basis. These great fathers defined Christianity in its final form for all generations to come. We are perhaps familiar with these names under the guise of the Greek fathers. In reality, they were Copts who wrote mainly in Greek, the language of the New Testament, and their profound knowledge of Greek misled Biblical scholars into the error of describing them as Greek instead of Coptic fathers.

Now let me jump over from the Council of Niceae (325) to the Council of Chalcedon (451) which marked the end of this important chapter in the history of Egypt. The Conciliar Movement had been led by the Copts and the spiritual and moral supremacy of the Coptic Bishop was tacitly but universally recognized at the beginning. Later on, this did not suit the Byzantines whose Patriarch resided in Constantinople, the seat of imperial government for the world. The fact that Alexandria was the leading power in the world of religion and theology seemed incompatible with the political hegemony of Constantinople. Thus the Greeks claimed superiority for their Patriarch and for their Church, and they set out to bring the Copts and the Coptic Church to a position of inferiority. The rupture between them became open in the Council of Chalcedon.

The differences in tenets and teachings were minor between the Byzantines and the Copts. But the Copts adhered to their doctrines partly as a means of expressing their national pride and were thus declared heretics by the Byzantines. The Copts stuck to their guns and fought out the theological battle at Chalcedon and failed. They never despaired. They went back home to incite revolt against the Byzantines, in defence of their religious beliefs, as well as their national autonomy. One might safely contend that the birth of Egyptian nationalism took place in the pale of the Coptic Church in 451 A. C. immediately after the Council of Chalcedon.

The revolt of the Copts was most noticeable in two centres. One was Alexandria where the church became the refuge place for all revolutionaries who defied Byzantium. In other words, the church became the rallying-point for Egyptian nationalists. Meanwhile, in Upper Egypt there was a resounding movement even greater than that of the metropolis under the leadership of St. Sanutius of Shenute. This remarkable person was the father of numerous monastic organizations whose rule was largely derived from the teachings of St. Pachomius the Great, founder of Coptic cenobitism in the 4th. Century.

It is needless to say how much monasticism contributed to Christian civilization. Its institutions arose and were developed to an astounding degree of perfection within Egypt by the Coptic monks. First we have the hermits who retired to the deserts for a life of complete seclusion, uninterrupted devotion, and severe austerity. Next came a transitional stage where the individual hermits drew nearer together round the hermitage of a great master to whom they looked for guidance and instruction in an atmosphere of better security both physically and spiritually. The third stage was due to the genius of St. Pachomius the Great who, in the course of the fourth century, started cenobitic life in the Thebaid with a closely knit rule for the government of each monastery. The new system spread far and wide throughout the Egyptian deserts. In some places the number of the brotherhood reached 50,000 strong. When Palladius, the author of the famous *Historia Lausiaca*, undertook his pilgrimage to the wilderness of the Nitrean Valley (here there are still four great monasteries in use since the fourth century), he says that he was met by thousands of monks singing a hymn and that on closing his eyes, he did not know whether he was on earth or in heaven.

The greatest successor to St. Pachomius was

St. Sanutius (Apa Shenute) whose monastic organization was centred in the White Monastery and the Red Monastery still to be seen and partly in use near the city of Suhag (Upper Egypt). His followers numbered over 50.000 men who were monks and fighters at one and the same time. Their battalions actually fought the battle of religion and of independence and stood behind their leader who carried the banner of nationalism high amongst his compatriots in Upper Egypt. An ardent Copt, he also tried to purify Coptic teachings and society from all traces of the Byzantines. Even in the Coptic language, he planned to suppress the Greek words which had found their way into his native literature. In a sense, St. Sanutius signalled the birth of Egyptian neo-nationalism by his own career. This spirit became an enduring tradition with the Copts until the present day. At the time when Saad Zaghloul rose in 1919 and formed the Wafd Party, a good number of its members were Copts. I, a Copt, still remember with pride and pleasure those days and the nights I spent in the Al Azhar Mosque while we were beleaguered by enemy forces. We slept on rough matting and our shoes became our pillows. Meanwhile, our Moslem brethren made frequent visitations to the Coptic churches and there was complete harmony during the revolution of 1919. This



nationalistic tendency for which the Copts are credited is still alive amongst them at the present time.

Today in Egypt the Copts number about 1,500,000 out of a population of twenty-two millions — that is, one twelfth roughly of the total number of Egyptians. They represent a by-gone civilization as far as the West is concerned.

Again, three years ago, when President Gamal Abd Al-Nasser started the Great Egyptian Revolution — now in full swing — the Copts wholeheartedly backed him.

Nevertheless, I believe I am justified when I say that there is a growing feeling amongst many communities of independent denominations that they should return to the form of Christianity, which was prevailing in the fourth and fifth centuries. In other words, there is a noticeable tendency towards the rites and doctrines of primitive Christianity which is best represented in the Coptic Church. As a matter of fact, the Coptic Church may rightly be regarded as a living museum of these early forms of early Christianity. Those who can read between the lines will be able to uncover much of the teachings of the early fathers in the structure of the Coptic Church, its services and its archaic ways and manners. On the whole,

the Copts and their Church stand for a worthwhile phase in Egyptian civilization and in Christian civilization.

The spiritual side of the Copts is revealed in the teachings of the Orthodox Faith. When we talk about Coptic Orthodoxy, I hope you will permit me to use a group of extraneous words to explain what I mean. Our Orthodoxy has clung from the very beginning to the doctrines of monophysitism and monothelitism, that is, the one nature and the one will of Jesus Christ. The unity of Godhead is especially underlined in our creed. The Coptic Creed believes in the Trinity, but that undivided oneness is very predominant in our beliefs. These may be considered minor items now, but in the old days they caused wars and persecutions amongst the various types and peoples. These gave departures to many teachings within the Coptic church which have to be studied.

The Coptic mass is still celebrated in our Coptic churches. I am sure that my own children do not know much Coptic. However, to my astonishment they come from church reciting phrases from the Coptic mass. Coptic is embedded in their sub-conscious mind through its continuous practice for thousands of years past. They respond to it readily. And we have, moreover, to admit that

the Coptic Mass is one of the most enchanting features in our Church. According to tradition, it was orally transmitted by St. Mark to other generations and finally recorded by St. Cyril the Great in the third century. It is regarded as the greatest, the oldest and the completest Mass text in existence. As a piece of religious literature, it is simply supreme. This Coptic Mass plus the works of the Coptic fathers are the chief elements in the spiritual heritage of the Copts.

The material heritage of the Copts has suffered much in comparison with the spiritual, but it would be utterly unfair to minimize its importance in the cadre of Christian civilization. When we visit some of the monasteries in the desert, or the churches and catacombs in Old Cairo, we shall surely notice that ecclesiastical architecture was born in Egypt. In the Coptic Museum we see splendid specimens of the arts and crafts of the Copts, and they embrace practically all departments of human activities. Stone and stucco work stands out in the first galleries. Needlework here is at its best. We should not forget to look at the gate of St. Barbara's Church which dates from the fourth century, and in which we see metal work, pottery, porcelain, glass, ikons, parchment, papyrus and textiles.

It is gratifying to note that, in recent times,

some of the greatest universities, both in Europe and in America, have taken to the study of many aspects of what may be described as Coptic civilization, or if I may be permitted to call it, the science of « Coptology ». In Oxford, the study of the Coptic Bible and philology has flourished, while scholars in Paris and Brussels have been busy publishing the lives of the Fathers of the desert and their monastic rules. Lately, there has been an awakening in Coptic literary studies in the Vatican and of gnostic philosophy in Manchester. In America, Michigan and Pennsylvania lead the way and bear high the torch of Coptic learning. In the course of 1953, the University of Michigan has acquired one of the most significant acquisitions of Coptic textiles of outstanding quality, colour, design, texture and age. Its size and variety will give archaeologists all over the world working material for generations yet to come. I am sure that you will not miss the pleasure of seeing that collection when you visit Ann Arbor.

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# MOSLEM EGYPT

*by*

HUSSAIN MONES

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It is about time to try to modify this term which is incompatible with both historical fact and exact chronology of the history of Egypt. In fact, this term is supposed to distinguish too long a period in the history of Egypt — more than twelve centuries — which runs from the Arab Conquest in 640 down to the arrival of the French Expedition to Egypt in 1798. The term seems inaccurate. It seems to have been arbitrarily coined for Egypt alone by modern orientalists, since we do not hear of such things like «Moslem Arabia» or «Moslem Iraq».

Other Historians have adopted the term «*Mediaeval Egypt*»: an expression which has no more chance of precision than the first one, because by 640 Egypt — as a part of the Roman World — had already blown over at least three centuries of mediaeval times. Moreover, following the traditional



partition of universal history, this Mediaeval Egypt should have come to an end by the middle of the 15th. century. By that time, Egypt was right in the middle of her so-called Mediaeval history.

I would venture to propose the term «*Asiatic Egypt*», because, right from 640 down to 1798, Egypt was dominated by Asiatic races. It was completely detached, politically and culturally, from the Western World and from the Mediterranean Zone in whose cultural orbit she lived until then. In 1798, the Asiatic domination came to an end. Egypt was able to resume her long and traditional path as a country both Mediterranean and African. It is quite clear that Egypt found herself again from the beginning of the 19th. century: A fact that counts a good deal in determining its astounding rise and progress in modern times.

Once this problem of technical terminology is settled, we can proceed to review the landmarks in the development of Egyptian history during that long period. Twelve centuries are such a long time that it is quite impossible to consider them as one homogenous period.

In fact, we have more than one Egypt to deal with between 640 and 1800. We have Arab Egypt

(640-870) which was a mere province belonging to the Califs of Medina, Damascus and Baghdad. Then we have *semi-independent* Egypt (870-960), which was administered by local dynasties but attached to the Abbasid Caliphate by a nominal bond of vassalage and rather irregular annual tribute. Then comes the *Fatimid period* of mighty independent caliphs claiming descentance from Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet.

The Fatimid Era can be considered as a turning point in the history of Egypt, since the independence which the Fatimids secured for the land and the policy of expansion in Syria and Arabia which they initiated were carefully maintained and followed up by their successors: the Ayyubids (1171-1250) and the Mameluks (1250-1717).

During those two consecutive reigns Egypt attained the climax of her glory in her Asiatic period. The Ayyubid Dynasty was founded in 1171 by the famous Saladin: a prominent and fascinating figure in universal history because of the outstanding role he played in the long duel between East and West: The Crusades.

The whole Ayyubid period was a great age in the annals of Egypt: Cairo was not only the capital

and centre of the whole Moslem world, but also its most invincible stronghold. She defied triumphantly the dashing courage of Western knighthood then in its most brilliant hay-days. Host after host of those intrepid cavaliers sustained by Papal Grace and supported by the finest naval units of Venice, Pisa and Genoa, tried in vain to save the remnants of the footholds of the Crusaders in the Holy land. They even ventured to attack Egypt itself to bring her resistance to an end. This adventure ended by a sad «finale» with Saint Louis, the king of France, prisoner in Egyptian hands (1249).

Then came the glorious epoch of the Mameluks : a series of «slave» sultans who ruled over Egypt, Syria and Arabia one after another. It seems paradoxical to the Western mind that a «slave» can be a sovereign. But nothing can be more natural if we take into consideration the traditional policy of Asiatic rulers to govern through members of their personal retenue. In the case of a feeble sovereign or the sudden death of a monarch without definite successors the reins of government pass to household servants or slaves. That is exactly what happened on the unexpected death of the last of the Ayyubids in 1250. His Mameluks came to power and ran the Empire on their own.

Thus in the case of those Mameluks the term «Mameluk» is no more related to «slavery» than the word «sclavus» is now to the Russian «slavs». Moreover a good number of those Mameluks proved to be great soldiers and able administrators. As warriors, they checked the overwhelming waves of Mongul barbarian attacks on the Moslem world in two pitched battles : the first was near Ain-Jalut in Palestine, (1260) and the second took place 20 years later near «Homs», where the great Mameluk Sultan Kalawoon sealed the fate of the disastrous Mongul onslaughts and saved Moslem culture from their danger for good.

The Empire of the Mameluks stretched from the Euphrates to Cyrenaica. They knew how to administer it with great ability. The secret of the efficiency of their administration lay in the balance they could realize between feudal rights and central bureaucracy. Thanks to their elaborate administrative system and their military ability, Egypt attained the highest watermark of its power and its civilisation in the Middle Ages.

The great majority of the famous old mosques of Cairo were built by Mameluk Sultans. Their glorious period ended in 1517, when Egypt became a Turkish province.



Egypt thence slipped gradually to the darkest abyss of her history in Moslem times.

Three centuries of Turkish tyranny and systematic plunder brought this rich country to the pitiable state in which Napoleon and his soldiers found it in 1798. These brought the Asiatic rule over Egypt to an end. The Mediterranean became no more a «front» against a hostile West, but rather a doorway to cultural intercourse and friendly relations.

Mediterranean Egypt rose and began a new era of its history. She regained the old path of her glorious ancient history. To-day she proceeds along the road of progress hand-in-hand with the West, the foundations of whose civilisation she had carefully laid down some 4000 years ago.

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Despite this unsteady political development, the Egyptian nation went on in its way slightly affected by the continual change of governors and dynasties, as if this continual change never touched the fundamental basis of social and administrative organisation. We should, nevertheless, remark that

Moslem institutions suffered such slight modifications throughout history between the regime initiated by the first Caliphs and that adopted by the last Sultans.

The machine of government could change; the number of offices could differ; the titles of post-holders could take this or that form, but the basis and the general shape of government always were the same : the obligations and duties of both governors and governed remained almost unaltered.

People paid duties and taxes; the Caliph or Sultan disposed of the treasury as he pleased as long as he maintained an adequate army and a good administrative system and behaved himself in a reasonable way as befitted a Moslem ruler.

The only direct contract between governor and governed was taxation. As Egyptians, from time immemorial, developed a good village-community, their organised communities helped them always to settle their problems with the treasury. The taxes stipulated by Moslem law were unbelievably low in comparison with the big exactions grabbed previously by both Romans and Byzantines. The taxpayer had in general no difficulty in settling his accounts with the Moslem treasury.

The most important kinds of taxes imposed by Moslem law on Egyptian and other non-Moslem subjects of the Empire of Islam in its early times were the poll-tax called «*Jigiah*», and the land-tax called «*Kharaj*». The first Arab governors estimated the annual sum-total to be paid by every village, and left the local chiefs to assess it as they pleased. Every year they discounted an amount equivalent to this personal toll — in such a way that the tribute due to the Arab treasury dropped from 12 and 14 million «dinars» in the first years of Arab domination to only 4 million some 30 years later. Throughout the Moslem period the amount of the taxes levied from all Egypt was around this relatively moderate sum. Here and there we hear of governors who tried to exceed the normal average, but things found their traditional equilibrium in the long run, one way or another.

The conversion of Egyptians to Islam and their assimilation in the general texture of Moslem Arab culture seem to be two unsoluble problems in the history of this land. Moslem annalists consider the two phenomena of *Islamisation* and *arabisation* everywhere as the natural trend of all human beings, and thus they do not try even to offer us the reasonable milestones of this process which might help us to find out how it was achieved.

Modern scholars attribute it to the desire of Copts (Christians of Egypt) to get rid of the poll-tax. This theory looks quite unsatisfactory to those who have the slightest idea of the strong attachment of Copts to their Christian faith before Islam.

It is rather unbelievable that those Copts, who endured the most awful ordeals inflicted upon them by the Roman and Byzantine emperors and who, thanks to their heroism, were able to preserve their Christian creeds as orthodox could have abandoned their cherished faith for such a slight reason as to escape the poll-tax. They endured the massacres of Dacius and Diocletianus rather than fall back to paganism. They suffered the most horrible atrocities of Byzantine Emperors rather than accept the formulas stipulated by the All-Christian Concilii of Ephesos and Chalcedon. They produced such great fathers and heroes of the Church as Athanasius, Cyrilles, Theophilus and Dioscorus. They combatted triumphantly the great theological theories formulated by such remarkable Christian thinkers as Nestorius and Jean Chrisostome, and succeeded at last in keeping their dear monophysite creed pure as it was formulated by Athanasius and based on the bible of Marcus the founder of the Alexandrian Church.



Bearing all these facts in mind, we cannot imagine that such devotion to Christianity could give way only because of a couple of «dinars» annual tribute or even double this amount.

Again, the shifting from Greek and Coptic languages to Arabic is hard to explain in a satisfactory way. It seems more so when we realise that the Arabic used by Egyptians to-day is the nearest dialect to pure classical Arabic, even nearer to it than the Arabic spoken in Arabia itself.

The solution of this twofold problem may be easier if we imagine that the expansion of Arabic language in Egypt preceded the conversion to Islam.

Let us examine the first phase of this process, I mean the shifting to Arabic. Egyptians spoke many languages during the first half of the seventh century A.D. The learned ones used Greek; the literate and religious people spoke Coptic : a blend of demotic and Greek; the illiterate spoke dialects of Coptic. There was no such thing as a national or universal vehicle of understanding common to all Egyptians. Then came the Arabs with their language : an elaborate mode of expression, holy and official at the same time. Those who wanted to take

part in the administration or to understand the new masters tried to acquire their language. Greek lost its value as an official language and gave way to Arabic. It disappeared quickly. Coptic was used only in churches and monasteries and was read and written by a minority. Arab tribes were scattered everywhere, and ordinary Egyptians got accustomed to hear their language and use it bit by bit.

Slowly but steadily the language of the Arabs found its way and established itself as a universal way of speech everywhere in the land. He who could speak Arabic was sure to find somebody to understand him wherever he went, whereas his local Coptic dialect was limited and almost useless. Thus did everybody try to acquire Arabic. Local dialects vanished to such an extent that Egyptian priests had to give their sermons in Arabic.

The spread of Arabic paved the way to conversion to Islam. In fact the Christians of Egypt found themselves pushed year after year, more and more deeply into the heart of a huge and ever expanding Moslem World. On one side, Arabia and Syria had already become Moslem by the end of the 5th. decade of Moslem history. On the other, North Africa became completely Moslem during the first half of the second century of Islam.

Arab fleets controlled the eastern basin of the Mediterranean and stopped all forms of intercourse between Egypt and the Christian world.

Egyptians were completely severed from the rest of the world of Christendom and had only one track to follow : the Moslem, the Eastern. They seldom heard again of Constantinople or Rome. Those centres were to their minds even farther than China. They spoke and wrote Arabic and understood the Quran rather than Greek or Coptic scripture.

In such circumstances nothing could be more natural than conversion to Islam. They embraced the new religion with all the strong devotion and religious zeal peculiar to their race from times immemorial. They became not only Moslems, but they clinged to that faith in its purest form : The *Sunny* creed. Nothing could change their minds thereafter.

Moreover, at the time when the Moslems of Spain and Syria suffered terribly from Christian attacks, and those of Persia were overwhelmed by Mongul invasions, the Moslems of Egypt went on in their way peacefully. Moslem scholars flocked to Egypt from East and West searching for refuge. The result was that this land was considered the heart of the Moslem world and the centre of Islamic culture from the tenth century onwards.

We shall now try to trace the broad lines of the evolution of Moslem culture in Egypt, since the space at our disposal does not permit us to indulge in any detail. We shall describe life in Moslem Egypt during the different periods of its history; we shall trace the evolution of those aspects of cultural development in which Egypt excelled; we shall concentrate on those cultural activities which reflect in my opinion the scientific, artistic and literary personality of Egypt at its best.

The evolution of culture and society in Moslem countries did not proceed parallel to their political development. In examining the development of culture and society in Moslem Egypt, we notice in the first place that it lacks that continuity apparent in similar domains in the history of Western peoples. Here we do not find that logical evolution of institutions and forms of society and patterns of culture familiar to those who study the history of Europe from the age of the German Invasions to the Renaissance.

It may be that the general circumstances in the Moslem world did not permit such natural evolution or that the necessary data for such study is still lacking. All we can say is that we have a certain number of trustworthy descriptions of life in Moslem Egypt under the reign of this or that



dynasty. The transition from one pattern of society to the other, the historical change from a certain form of social organisation to the other, the gradual steps that attach those stages one to the other, all these things escape scientific investigation.

The real cause of such a strange phenomenon may be found in the basic Moslem theory about social evolution. Moslems believed that their society had attained its definite pattern in the days of the Prophet Mohammad and his immediate four successors. Any kind of change of this pattern was regarded as violation of the ideal shape of things. Reformation consisted simply of bringing things to the natural shape they had in that golden period. In this way we can explain that curious rotation of Moslem social development.

It seems that Egyptian Moslem society was born mature. The description of life in Fustat — the first capital of Moslem Egypt — reveals an incredible progress. This city, which began its life in 641 A.D. as a simple provisional camp of tents pitched by Amr-Ibn-al-Ass conqueror of Egypt, looked remarkably urbanised two centuries later. By 850 A.D. it measured some 3 miles in circumference. Its houses are described as handsome and towering. Some of those houses were 5 or 7 stories high and contained some 200 dwellers.



Recent excavations in the site of Fustat give us an idea about the architectural form of those buildings. They were big Oriental houses called « rab' », These were huge rectangular theatre-like houses with a vast *patio* in the centre. All appartments gave on this *patio* by means of a surrounding balcony similar to the balconies of a theatre. This type of primitive but practical dwelling is still to be seen all over the Moslem world.

One of those houses is said to have contained about 800 dwellers. We are informed by trustworthy chroniclers that water was conducted to many of those houses through brick rubes.

Life was easier in those days. The population of the country was about 6 million inhabitants. They all lived in abundance. A traveller who visited Egypt around 950 A.D. tells that craftsmen were so busy that he kept searching for a free one for several days. The Caliph Al-Mamun visited Egypt in 832. He and his army were entertained by a single rich woman of the village of Ta'-al-Naml (Sharkiya).

During the second half of the 10th. century the country was even more progressive. The details given by historians about the wealth of people seem to us fantastic. A Persian traveller, Nasiri Khusru, visited Egypt between 1046 and 1049 and gave us

an idea of Egypt in those years. The Capital was no longer Fustat but Cairo, the « victorious » city built in 929 to be the residence of the Fatimid Caliphs. Here is a summary of his description as given by Stanley Lane Poole. (\*).

Cairo itself (then called Al-Kahira el-Mo'izziya), was a very large town when he (Mariri Khusru) saw it in 1045-49; the houses, roughly estimated at 20,000, were built chiefly of bricks, so carefully joined that they looked like squared stone, to the height of five or six storeys, and separated from other houses by well cultivated gardens and orchards, irrigated by wells and water-wheels. The rent of a moderately sized house of four storeys was 11 dinars a month (or about £70 a year) and the landlord of the house in which the traveller lodged refused 5 dinars a month for the top storey. All the houses in Cairo belonged to the Caliph, and the rents were collected every month. The shops, which were reckoned at 20,000 were also his property, and were let at from 2 dinars to 10 dinars a month, which even taking so low an average as 5 dinars represents an annual income of about £650,000. The old wall of the city was no longer standing in 1046, and the second wall had not yet been begun; but the Per-

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\* Stanley Lane Poole : *Manners and Customs of modern Egyptians*.

sian traveller was struck by the high blank walls of the houses and still more of the palace, the stones of which were so closely united that they looked like a solid block. His account of the interior is disappointingly brief, but he mentions the celebrated throne-room, with its throne of gold, sculptured with hunting-scenes, surrounded by a golden lattice screen, and ascended by silver steps. He was told that the palace contained 30,000 people, including 12,000 servants, and that the guard mounted every night consisted of 1,000 horse and foot. The city of Misr (Fustat) was separated from Cairo by a space of nearly a mile, covered with gardens, flooded by the Nile in the inundation, so that in summer it looked like a sea. This was the well-known and well-loved « Lake of the Abyssinians », (*Birkat-al-Habash*), with its surrounding gardens, a favourite resort of Cairenes, of which Ibn Sa'id sings :

« O, lake of the Abyssinians, where my day was one long spell of happy peace. Heaven seemed on thy bosom and all my time a joyous feast. How lovely is the flax when it rises upon thee with its flowers or bands in knots, and its leaves unsheathed from thee like swords ».

« Hard by was the monastery of St. John, with its beautiful gardens, laid out by Temim the son of

the caliph Mo'izz and afterwards a favourite spot of the caliph Hafiz and the « Well of the Steps » shaded by a giant sycamore. Misr was built on an elevation, to escape the water, and to the Persian traveller looked « like a mountain » from a distance with its houses of seven to fourteen storeys, standing each on a space of 30 cubics square, and capable of holding 350 people. Some of the streets were covered, and lighted by lamps. There were seven mosques in Misr and eight in Cairo; the number of Khans (wekalas) was reckoned at 200. A bridge of 36 boats joined Misr to « the Island » (Roda), but there was no bridge from the island to Giza, only a ferry ».

« The traveller was especially struck by the Market of Lamps at Misr, where he saw rarities and works of art such as he saw in no other city, and was astonished at the profusion of fruits and vegetables in the bazaars.

« He describes the pottery made at Fustat as so delicate that you could see your hand through it, and remarks the metallic lustre which is still seen in fragments found in the mounds which occupy the site of the city. He also saw some fine transparent green glass made there. The shopkeepers sold « at a fixed price », and if they cheated they were put on a camel and paraded through the



streets, ringing a bell and confessing their fault. All the trades-people rode donkeys, which were on hire in every street to the number of 50,000. Only the soldiers rode horses ».

« Nasiri Khusru found Egypt in a state of the utmost tranquility and prosperity. The shops of the jewellers and money-changers, he says, were left unfastened, save by a cord (perhaps a net, as in the present day) stretched in front, and the people had full confidence in the government and in the amiable caliph. He saw Mustansir riding his mule at the high festival of cutting the canal: a pleasant-looking young man, with shaven face, dressed very simply in a white koftan and turban, with a parasol enriched with precious stones and pearls carried by a high officer. Three hundred Persians of Deylem followed on foot, armed with halberds and axes. Eunuchs burnt incense of ambergris and aloes on either sides, and the people threw themselves on their faces and called down blessings on the caliph. The chief kadi and a crowd of doctors and officials followed, and the escort included 20,000 mounted Kitama Berbers, 10,000 Batilis, 20,000 blacks, 10,000 « Orientals » (Turks and Persians), 30,000 purchased slaves, 15,000 Bedawis of the Hejaz, 30,000 black and white slave attendants and chamberlains (*ustad*), 10,000 palace servants (*Serayi*) and 30,000 negro swordsmen ».



« Besides these (who constituted the whole army, and probably were only represented by select divisions) the caliph's suite included various princes visiting the court, from Maghrib, Yemen, Rum, Slovenia, Georgia, Nubia, Abyssinia, and even Tatars from Turkestan and the sons of the king of Delhi. Poets and men of letters, in the caliph's pay, attended and all Cairo and Misr, Christians included, turned out to see the cutting of the dam by the caliph, beside the pavilion es-Sukkara, built by his ancestor Aziz near the mouth, and then to go sailing on the Nile. The first boat-load was of deaf and dumb people, whose presence made an auspicious opening of the festivities. Though his descriptions relate chiefly to the capital, the Persian traveller records enough about the country from Tinnis to Aswan to confirm the impression that in agriculture and in general appearance it differed little from Egypt to-day».

Life in Egypt and its capital, Cairo, did not change very much during the next five centuries. During the heyday of the Ayyubid and Mamluk sultans the country flourished more and more. Cairo became the pride of the Moslem world. To the gaudy buildings erected by the Fatimids, the Ayyubids added the great Citadel which is still standing on the crest of the Mokattam hills overlooking Cairo.

It was built by Saladin in 1183. At the foot of those hills he planted wonderful gardens which a French traveller, Jehan Thevand, describes as « des somptueux et grans jardins plains de fruitiers ».

Another traveller, an Andalusian named Ali ibn Sa'id describes life in Egypt in the 14th. century as the most agreeable in the whole Moslem world.

In the 15th. century the European traveller Piloti of Crete, who visited Egypt in 1420, speaks of a very significant side of the progress of Egypt under the Mamluks : the commerce with Europe. In those days Egypt was one of the big maritime powers in the Mediterranean. She dominated Cyprus and Rhodes for a certain time during that century. Alexandria rose again and tried to regain its place in the Mediterranean. Venetians, Pisans and French merchants had their colonies, inns and depots in both Cairo and Alexandria. Egyptian textiles were to be found in all markets of Europe. We find them in the markets as far as Germany and Northern Spain. Piloti admires Egyptian life and is startled to find such opulence outside the world of Christendom.

We possess a remarkable document describing life in Egypt during the Ottoman period from 1517 to 1798. It is that masterly treatise written by

the famous English traveller Lane Poole on « *Manners and Customs of Modern Egyptians* ».

It is true that the book describes Egypt as it was in the late eighties, but it is evident that all that he says applies fairly well to the three preceding centuries. In his eloquent description we see how life in Egypt was peaceful and flourishing, how society was orderly and dignified. He describes the people as healthy and well-built. He enjoyed life in this country so much that he spent ten years of his life among its people, living with them, speaking their language and dressed in their attire.

The description of Lane Poole illustrates Egyptian society up to the dawn of her modern times. A comparison between the portrait he gives us and the well-known picture of the land in the late nineties may be one of the most attractive studies for both historian and sociologist. It reveals one of the most striking phenomena of the clash of cultures, and it shows how two different patterns of society came to interact on one another. But this lies already out the scope of the present chapter. However, research conducted on this subject will be certainly gratifying and useful.

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### III.

We now turn to another side of Egyptian mediaeval culture : that of cultural, artistic and intellectual progress. We shall content ourselves with three aspects of this manifold and attractive field : medicine, architecture and literature. I chose those sides particularly, because Egypt had deeply rooted traditions in every one of them.

Since the dawn of history, Egypt was well-known to be the land of medicine and doctors *par excellence*. Even during Roman times, when Egypt waned away and became a Roman province, Egyptian doctors were the best in the world, and whenever a Roman Emperor had a serious disease, an Egyptian doctor was summoned to cure him.

Egypt preserved this medical renown during Moslem times. Nothing can represent this side better than the hospitals for which Egypt was well-known throughout the middle ages. They were called *Bimaristans* or *Maristans*. The hospital tradition goes in the history of Moslem Egypt as far back as the end of the 9th. century. Ahmed ibn Tulun — the first of the semi-independent rulers of Asiatic Egypt — is said to have been the founder of the first public hospital in Egypt. It was erected in 873.

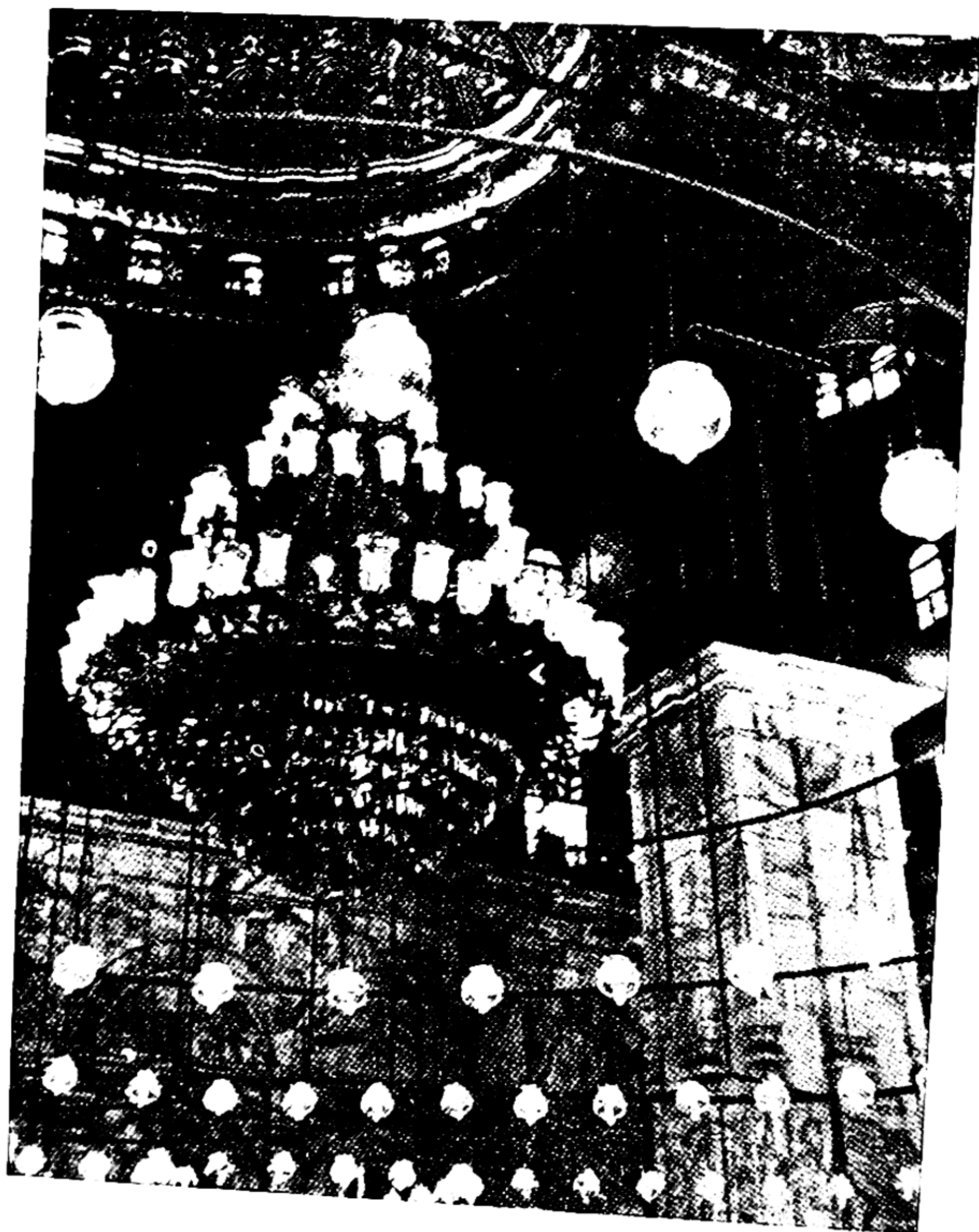


Its description shows that it was built and organized according to an already established tradition. It had two separate sections, one for men and one for women. The regulations of the house stipulated that every patient should be given new clean hospital-attire and a fresh bed as soon as he was examined by a specialist. The sign of recovery was the ability of the patient to consume a chicken, a symptom of recovery which seems quite reasonable. Ibn Tulun instituted also that a physician should sit in the public mosque every Friday accompanied by an ambulant drug-store quite ready to give emergency service.

Egyptian hospitals made great progress during the next four centuries. In 1284, Al-Nasir Kalawoon, one of the greatest of Mamluk Sultans, erected a big hospital which «comprised special wards for segregating various diseases, such as fevers, ophthalmia and dysentery, and was provided with laboratories, a dispensary, baths, kitchens and store-rooms. The hospital had an endowment yielding about a million dirhems annually. It employed male and female attendants and was open to the sick of both sexes ».

The existence of hospitals in Moslem Egypt proves naturally that medical people were numerous in the country. In fact, historical annals mention a





The Citadel Mosque.



good number of excellent doctors who could equal the best European medical men down to the close of the 18th. century. The well-known traveller, archaeologist and doctor Abdullatif Al-Baghdadi tells us how he insisted on visiting Egypt at any price in order to learn medicine from its doctors. In his days, the most celebrated of Egyptian doctors were three: Yasin at Simawi, Musa ibn Maymoun and Abu al-Qasim al Shari'i. It is very interesting to read in his narrative how he found the first to be a quack, the second to be a real scientist versed in medical knowledge, but completely absorbed by material gains, the third was, according to his criteria, the best, because to his wide knowledge he added modesty and disdain of wordly things, a character proper to a man of science.

Abdullatif's remarks show already that in those days people in the Moslem world knew how to distinguish real men of medical knowledge from quacks or humbugs. To illustrate the kind of knowledge those Egyptian doctors possessed, it is enough to refer to Ibn Nafis who was for a long time the chief physician of the Mansurian Hospital in Cairo.

His accurate knowledge of physiology and therapeutics is startling. In his commentary on the Qanun of Ibn Sina, « Avicenna », he describes blood

circulation in such a way as to prove beyond doubt that he had discovered it three centuries before Servitus. He gives us a wonderful dissection of the lungs and the heart, and describes how blood passes from the right part of the heart to the lungs and returns purified to the left part of the heart, and then to the aorta to be distributed to the different parts of the body.

As Egypt and Syria formed but one country throughout both Ayyubid and Mamluk periods, it is not easy to follow cultural activities in one of them apart from the other. The distinguished men letters and science of both countries moved constantly from one to the other. We have thus to deal with culture in both countries together. Speaking of medicine, I allow myself to quote the following passage from Professor Philip Hitti's magnificent manual « A History of the Arabs ».

« Ophthalmology, one of the disciplines early developed by the Arabs, was practised on a more scientific basis in Syria and Egypt throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries than anywhere else in the world. In the twelfth century the most significant Arabic work on the subject was written by Abu-Al Fada'il ibn al-Naqid (1188-1189), a Judæo-Egyptian oculist of Cairo, under the title

*Mujarrabat* (tested remedies). But Syria after that took the lead. Here were composed the only two scholarly works of the period : *al-Kafi fi al-Kuhl* (the sufficient work on collyrium) by Khaifah ibn-abi-al Mahasin of Aleppo; who flourished about 1256, and *Nur al-Uyun wa Jami al - Funun* (the light of eyes and compendium of arts) by Salah-el-Din Ibn Yusuf, who practised in Hamah about 1269. Khalifah was so confident of his skill as a surgeon that he did not hesitate to remove a cataract for a one-eyed man. It is noteworthy that the Syrian scholars of the Mamluk period flourished in inland cities, the coast having been devastated by the Crusades and later by Qalawun and his successors, who feared the return of the Franks ».

« The most distinguished historian of medicine, the Arab world produced, Muwaffaq-al Din Abual-Abbas Ahmed ibn-abi Usaybi'ah (1203-70) flourished at Damascus in the early Mamluk period. Ibn abi-Usaibi'ah was himself a physician and son of a Damascene oculist. He studied medicine in his birth-place and Cairo, botanized with the celebrated Ibn al-Baytar and corresponded with the scientist physician «Abd-al-Latif al-Baghdadi». His masterpiece was his *Uyun al Anba fi Tabaqat al-Attiba* (sources of information on the classes of physicians).



« Since most of these physicians were at the same time philosophers, astronomers, physicists and mathematicians, the work is an invaluable source for the history of Arab science in general. It is almost unique in Arabic literature, the nearest approach to it being al-Qifti's *Ikhbar al-Ulama bi Akhbar al-Hukama'* (acquainting the learned with lives of medical people which has survived only in a compendium. Ali ibn-Yusuf al-Qifti, as the surname indicates, was born in Upper Egypt (1172) but spent a large part of his life in Aleppo, where he acted as vizir to its Ayyubid rulers until his death in 1248 ».

Before we turn to cast a glance at the architecture of Moslem Egypt, I would like to add a few words on two other branches of science in which Egyptians made noteworthy contributions :

The first is astronomy. In this domain, Egypt boasts of one of the most celebrated of medieval astronomers : Ali ibn Yunus.

He was a curious person whose devotion to astronomy reached the point of delirium. His *astronomical tables* surpassed all others in accuracy. He was able to correct all tables current at his time by original observations made by means of the armillary sphere and the azimuth circle. When he

went up the Mukattam Hills to observe a planet he disguised himself in such a strange attire that he looked like one of those mysterious magicians and miracle-performers of olden times. One of his colleagues accompanied him once as he was observing Venus and described the scene as follows :

«Ibn Yunos took off his clothes and turban, put on a red feminine robe and covered his face with a red veil, burned aloe, played the lute.... he was quite a marvel ». In spite of this eccentricity the man's astronomical calculations were infallible.

The second field was optics. Another man of medicine and a contemporary of Ibn Yunos was even more remarkable than he. He is the well-known optician Al-Hasan ibn al-Haytham, known to Europeans of the Middle Ages as Al-Hazen. Historians of science ascribe to him no less than a hundred works on mathematics, astronomy, philosophy and medicine.. «The chief work for which he is famous» — says Philip Hitti — «is that on optics, *Kitab al Manazir*, translated into Latin under the name of *Opticae Thesaurus* in 1572.

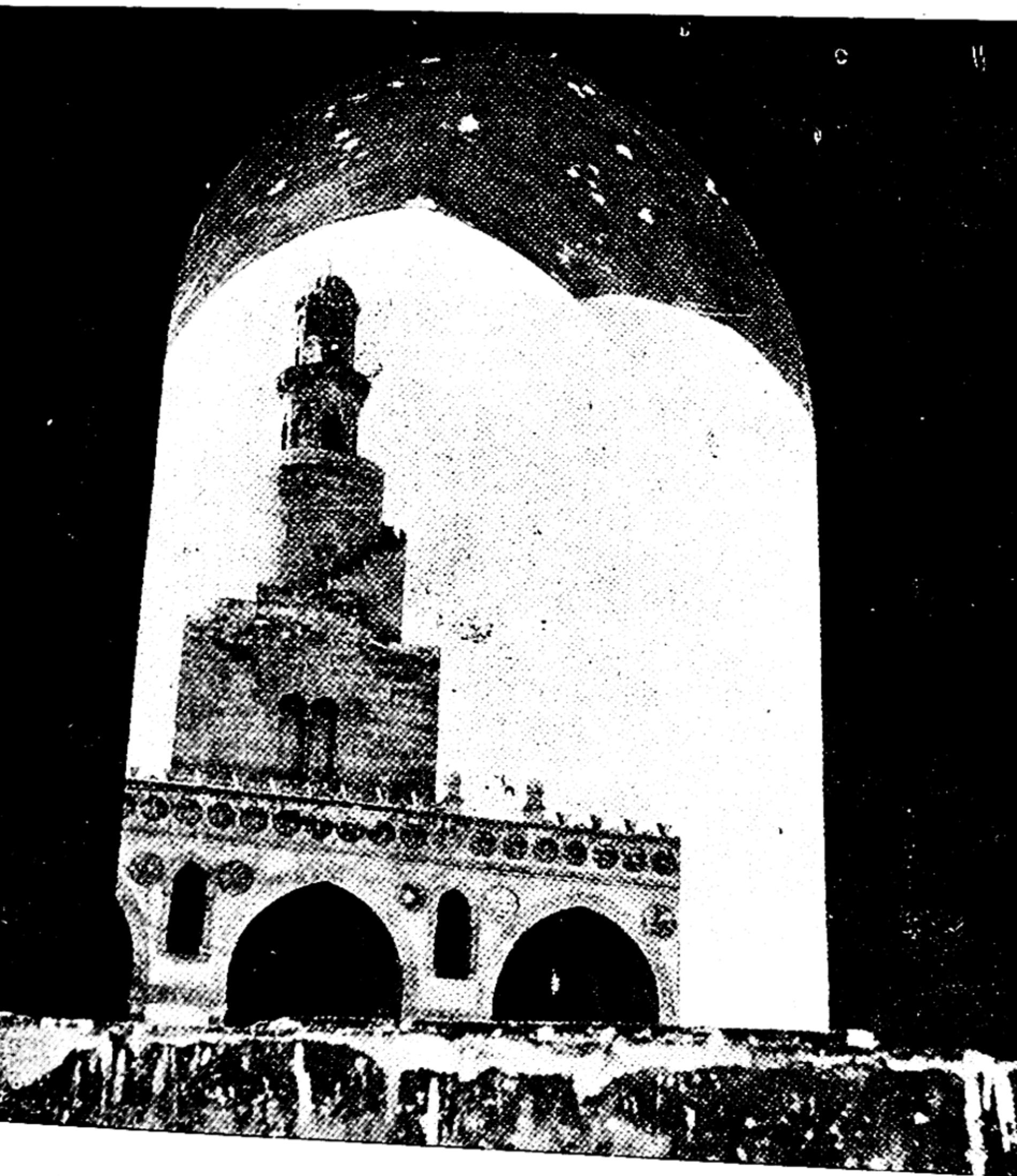
« Almost all medieval writers on this subject base their works on *Alhazen's Opticae Thesaurus*; Roger Bacon, Leonardo da Vinci and Johann Kepler show traces of its influence ».

« In his work, Ibn al-Haytham opposes the theory of Euclid and Ptolemy that the eye sends out visual rays to the object of vision and presents experiments for testing the angles of incidence and reflection. In certain experiments he approaches the theoretical discovery of magnifying lenses which was actually made in Italy three centuries later ». As he was imprisoned for a long time in a small dark room, he managed to make use of his adversity and worked hard to develop the idea of the *Camera Obscura*, which is - as we all know - the basis of photography.

As for architecture, it is undoubtedly one of the everlasting glories of Moslem Egypt. It is the fruit of a talent with which Egyptians have been gifted since the dawn of their history.

Moslem architecture in Egypt dated to the first year following the Arab conquest. In fact, the first of that magnificent series of Egyptian mosques was built in 643 A.D. by Amr Ibn al-'Ass the Arab conqueror of Egypt, and was enlarged five times between that year and 827 A.D. To-day it still preserves the aspect it had in the IXth. century in spite of the slight modifications it has undergone since then.

It is a handsome rectangular monument ; the court measures 110 x 125 metres, Half of this wide



Ahmed Ibn Toulun Mosque





area is an uncovered court-yard surrounded by arcades. The other half is the hall of prayer gracefully and skilfully decorated. The capitals of columns, the supports of ceilings, the corniches and the like are engraved and embroidered with exquisite ornaments that betray clear Hellenistic influence. These artistic touches are most probably the work of Coptic sculptors. They were designed after the four Minarets of the Grand Mosque of Damascus which stood on its corners and were designed as four big towers.

The mosque marks the birth of Moslem architecture in Egypt. Thereafter came those graceful and characteristic mosques of Cairo so well-known in the world.

In 879 Ahmed Ibn Tulun built his barrack mosque which still exists and which is noted for its minaret with its cylindrical outside-staircase. «The mosque», says Prof. Hitti, «is remarkable for the use of brick-piers and for the early use of the pointer arch ».

During the Fatimid period, Egyptian architecture attained a high standard of perfection. The collection of Fatimid monuments, both religious and military of which Cairo still boasts, marks many foreign artistic influences, mainly Byzantine. Such

magnificent mosques as the celebrated Al-Azhar, that of Al-Hakim which was built between 990 and 1003, Al-Aqmar finished in 1125 and the mosque of Al-Salih Talai, the last of Fatimid religious monuments, all these show clearly how the different architectural elements borrowed by Moslems from East and West were assimilated in a harmonious Egyptian style noted for its fine lines, exquisite decorations on timber, stone and marble as well as for sculptural beauty.

The Ayyubid period witnessed the development of another branch of architecture in Egypt, namely, the military branch.

The Fatimids were religious sovereigns. Apart from the famous walls and doors of Cairo, their structures were mostly religious. But Saladin and his successors were combatants for the cause of Islam. Their credit as builders lies mostly in their military construction. The Citadel of Cairo, still standing on the top of the Mokattam Hills, is the eternal monument of this Ayyubid military school. It reveals the clear influence of the architecture of the Crusader Chateaux in Syria and Palestine.

It was under the Mamluks (1250-1517) that Moslem art in Egypt attained its climax. We still contemplate with admiration the splendid mosques of Sultan Kalawoon (1285) with its hospital, school

and mausoleum ; those of Sultan Hassan (1356), Al-Muayyad (1420) Kayet Bey (1472) and many others which are considered among monuments of universal fame.

Hitti says « the Mamluk school of architecture, whose origins go back to Nurid and Ayyubid models, received fresh Syro-Mesopotamian influences when in the thirteenth century, Egypt became a haven of refuge for Moslem artists and artisans who fled from Al Mawsil, Baghdad and Damascus before the Mongul invasions. With the ending of the Crusades the obstruction to uninterrupted access to the stone-building territory to the north was removed and brick was abandoned in minaret construction in favour of stone ».

« The cruciform plan of school - mosque structure was developed to its perfection. Domes were constructed that defy rivary for lightness, beauty of outline and richness of decoration. Striped masonry and decoration (*ablaq*), obtained by using stones of different colours in alternate courses, of Roman or Byzantine origin, became a feature. The period was also noteworthy for the development of the stalactite pendentive as well as for the two other familiar features of Moslem decoration : geometrical arabesques and Kufic lettering. »

« Throughout all the Moslem ages animal forms were less freely used in Egypt and Syria than in Spain and Persia. Happily the finest examples of Mamluk structures have survived and still form one of the main attractions for tourists and students alike ».

We conclude this bird's-eye-view of Moslem Egypt by a few words on two of her most peculiar contributions to universal literature, namely history and folklore.

In such fields of pure Arab literary activity as poetry, rhythmic prose, Koran exegesis and the like, Moslem Egypt followed the traditional lines common to all other Moslem lands. In these she made perhaps no special outstanding contributions. But it had a special credit in two branches of intellectual activity : historiography and folklore.

In the first field we possess a coherent series of chronicles, annals, histories unequalled in any other medieval country, Eastern and Western. Beginning with Ibn Abd-al-Hakam, who described the Arab conquest in an admirable way, and ending by Abd al Rahman al Jabarty who furnishes us with the most accurate history of the Napoleonic Expedition to Egypt (1798-1801), this remarkable school of Egyptian historians established a characteristic tradition in history writing.



They complete one another in such a way that when ever one of them ends his chronicle, the other one begins and goes on registering events till he dies. They are wonderful both in accuracy and depth of conception.

We shall mention but one of them : Taqiy al-Din Al-Maqrizi (1364-1442), called the prince of Egyptian historians. A disciple of the famous Ibn Khaldoun, Al-Maqrizi was an unsurpassed example of assiduity and knowledge. He enriched the Arabic library with a great number of works ranging from short monographies on special topics to voluminous works. His book « *Al-Suluk fi Marifat Duwal al Muluk* » (The way to know the kingdoms) is in some 3,000 pages and is full of valuable material and accurate information.

«He is», says Jean Sauvaget, «a good example of the Arab compiler of the Middle Ages. Having read, with the pen in his hand, all that could be read in his time on the history of Egypt, he had only to rearrange his cards in different ways to bring out of them extensive works about exceedingly varied topics : a history of Egypt, a biographical dictionary of noted Egyptians, a treatise on Moslem coins and currency, etc.».

We discovered lately a bundle of his cards that shows beyond doubt that his working system was that of a modern scholar.

In folklore, Egypt shares with Persia the credit. It may not have produced a great epic like Firdausi's *Shahnameh*, but the most famous masterpiece of oriental folklore, « The Thousand and one Nights », is still narrated everywhere after the final version composed by Egyptian coffee-house storeytellers between the second half of the 15th. century and the first half of the 16th.

It is true that the origin of this most amusing collection of folk romances goes back many centuries earlier, and that Arabs came to know the Persian version derived from the Indian original, but it was in Cairo that the whole cycle was written down in one homogeneous series. Moreover, the best stories of the book are proved to be created by Egyptians.

In fact, « Thousand and one Nights » is not the only monument of Egyptian genius in story-telling. We still have many of those long tales of love, adventure, and heroism created by Egyptian Folk-genius. We have the romance of the great Mamluk Sultan Baybars; we have « The Romance of Antar » based on the exploits of the well-known Arab pre-Islamic poet Antarah ibn Shaddad. We have the « Gesta of Abou Zaid al Hilaly » a sort of Egyptian « Round Table » relating the deeds of knights in the Western deserts of Egypt.

The habit of reciting long romances, both in verse and prose, is an old tradition deeply rooted in Egyptian nature. It is still going on all over the country, and if a curious tourist or a scholar desires to witness how folklore is born, he has only to pass an evening in one of Egypt's *baladi* ( \_ national) cafés where he can listen to the *sha'ir* or folklore poet, narrating episodes from « Thousand and one Nights », or the love romance of Antar.



## MODERN EGYPT

by

Dr. ABDEL HAMID EL-BATRIK

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In the middle of the thirteenth Century, Egypt was dominated by the Mamelukes. These owed their connection with Egypt to the policy of the Ayyubid Sultans which had enabled them to secure a firm hold on the country. The Mameluke system of government contained within itself the seeds of its own destruction. Egypt was rigidly divided into two classes — on the one hand the Mameluke Amirs and their followers who owned most of the land, and on the other, the Egyptians who had no means of expressing their views and no choice but to toil for the lords and submit to whatever the ruling class imposed. When Sultan Selim I. turned Egypt into a Turkish province, he kept the Mameluke beys as a check on the Pasha (or Wali) who governed Egypt in his name; and so long as the tribute was regularly paid, the Sultan at Constantinople had no cause for interference. In the course of time, the beys gradually encroached upon the authority of the Turkish Pasha till only the shadow of his power remained. By the Eighteenth century he had become



a cipher and the Sheikh-el-Balad, the head of the Mamelukes was master of the government and the country.

One of the Mamelukes of the 18th. Century is worth mentioning. Ali Bey (Al-Kabir) on becoming Sheikh-el-Balad in 1757, decided to make himself independent. In 1769, a war between Turkey and Russia provided him with an excuse. The Sultan of Turkey called on Egypt to raise troops for the war, and Ali Bey refused. This refusal was tantamount to a declaration of war. When Ali Bey heard that the Sultan had ordered his execution he declared Egypt independent and expelled the Pasha. He went on to conquer a great part of Arabia and Syria. But misfortune befell him in Syria. Tempted by the Sultan, Mohammed Abu Addahab, who commanded Ali Bey's armies, turned traitor and marched against his master. The two met at Salhia, and Ali Bey fell on the field. After his death, Egypt was restored to Ottoman rule, and the conditions of the country went from bad to worse.

Neibuhr, the famous Danish traveller who visited Egypt during the reign of Ali Bey, describes the «Nature of the Egyptian Government» as follows :

«I have learned enough, however, to enable me to distinguish, that this government



President Nasser distributing ownership warrants.



is at present an aristocracy, partly civil, partly military, but chiefly military under the protection, rather than the authority, of the Sultan of Constantinople. There is a divan, or sovereign council, both executive and legislative. Even the revenue of the Sultan is more a tribute paid to a protector, than a tax levied by a sovereign. It is, besides, so moderate, that the necessary expenses of Government consume it entirely in Egypt; and the trunk, in which it is pompously conveyed to Constantinople, generally arrives there empty. Such a government must be frequently disturbed by factious insurrection. Cairo is constantly convulsed by cruel dissention; parties are continually jarring and the great retain troops to decide their differences by force of arms. The mutual jealousies of the chiefs seem to be the only causes which still preserve to the Porte the shadow of authority over this country. The members of the aristocracy (the Mamelukes) are all afraid of losing their influence under a residing sovereign and are one in opposing the elevation of any of their own body to the supreme dignity. In our own day, Ali Bey has found how difficult it is to ascend the throne of Egypt, or to maintain himself upon it».

After a long struggle the two Mameluke Beys, Ibrahim Bey and Murad Bey took over the administration. During their reign, Egypt was plunged into anarchy which continued intermittently until the French invasion of 1798 opened a new chapter in the history of Egypt.

No sooner were the French expelled from Egypt and the English about to leave, than the Mamelukes again began to raise their heads. Assuming that they had henceforth to deal only with the decadence and disorganization of the old Turkish government, they somewhat too confidently expected a resumption of that power that would place all Egypt at their feet. The great object of the Porte was to retain its power in Egypt, and prevent it from falling again into the hands of the Mamelukes. Out of this complicated struggle between the Porte and the Mamelukes emerged the strong personality of Mohammed Ali which established itself in public eyes. He had increased his popularity with the Egyptians, by acting as mediator between their leaders and the Ottoman Government.

At last, on the 14th. of May, 1805, Cairo, filled with rioters who had gathered in several districts, rose in revolt. A deputation of Sheikhs and Ulama declared that they no longer wished to be governed by Khurshid Pasha, the Wali, who had been ap-



pointed by the Porte, and that it was their desire that Mohammed Ali should be his successor. Khurshid refused to abdicate declaring that he « was Pasha of Egypt by order of the Sultan and would not relinquish his position at the demand of the fellaheen ». The Pasha was promptly declared deposed, and was besieged in his palace. Mohammed Ali's accession to power at the demand of the « Fellaheen » caused uneasiness to the Sublime Porte, which was, however, compelled to confirm him in his office in July 1805.

After Mohammed Ali had been confirmed by the Sultan, as Pasha of Egypt, he made himself owner of the soil by large-scale confiscation and instituted a system of state monopolies which brought him considerable revenue. The welfare of the Egyptians to whom he owed his position, did not interest him in the slightest. From the beginning of his reign he proceeded to crush the National Leaders and get rid of possible Egyptian national rivals. Fearing that they would endeavour to use against him the weapons employed by them against his predecessor (Khurshid Pasha), he used his skill and artifice to divide them into different cliques. At last he succeeded in sending the great leader of modern nationalism — El Said Omar Makram — to exile.

Thus did Mohammed Ali establish his power. Henceforth, he was free to turn Egypt into a wide personal estate. He did not try to make of Egypt a nation. He, himself, was an alien by birth, and to him the people of Egypt meant so little that he never even learnt to speak their language.

His first care was to secure his position in Egypt by making the country a formidable military and naval power, and to this end he consistently devoted one-half of the revenues of the state.

Later, Mohammed Ali's military position in Egypt improved, and his name and influence made themselves felt throughout the Turkish Empire. The increasing and advancing menace of the Wahhabis in Arabia rendered him more than ever necessary to the Turkish empire in the task of crushing Wahhabi rule in Arabia. Thus did the Sultan in 1809 turn to the Pasha of Egypt, whom he feared more than loved, in the hope that the latter could be induced to exhaust both his resources and his army in destroying the Wahhabis. The result would be to restore not only Arabia, but Egypt as well, to the Sultan. But the Pasha also entertained, through the Wahhabi expedition, certain ambitious schemes which would realize his complete independence and lead to his expansion in the Arab World. He was interested in that expansion because it

might give him the opportunity to overcome some of his troubles in Egypt, and to clarify his position as regards the Sultan. Thus, in accepting the orders of the Porte, he was never inspired by any loyalty or affection for it; he did not intend to move unless he secured advantages, military and political, which would make it worth his while.

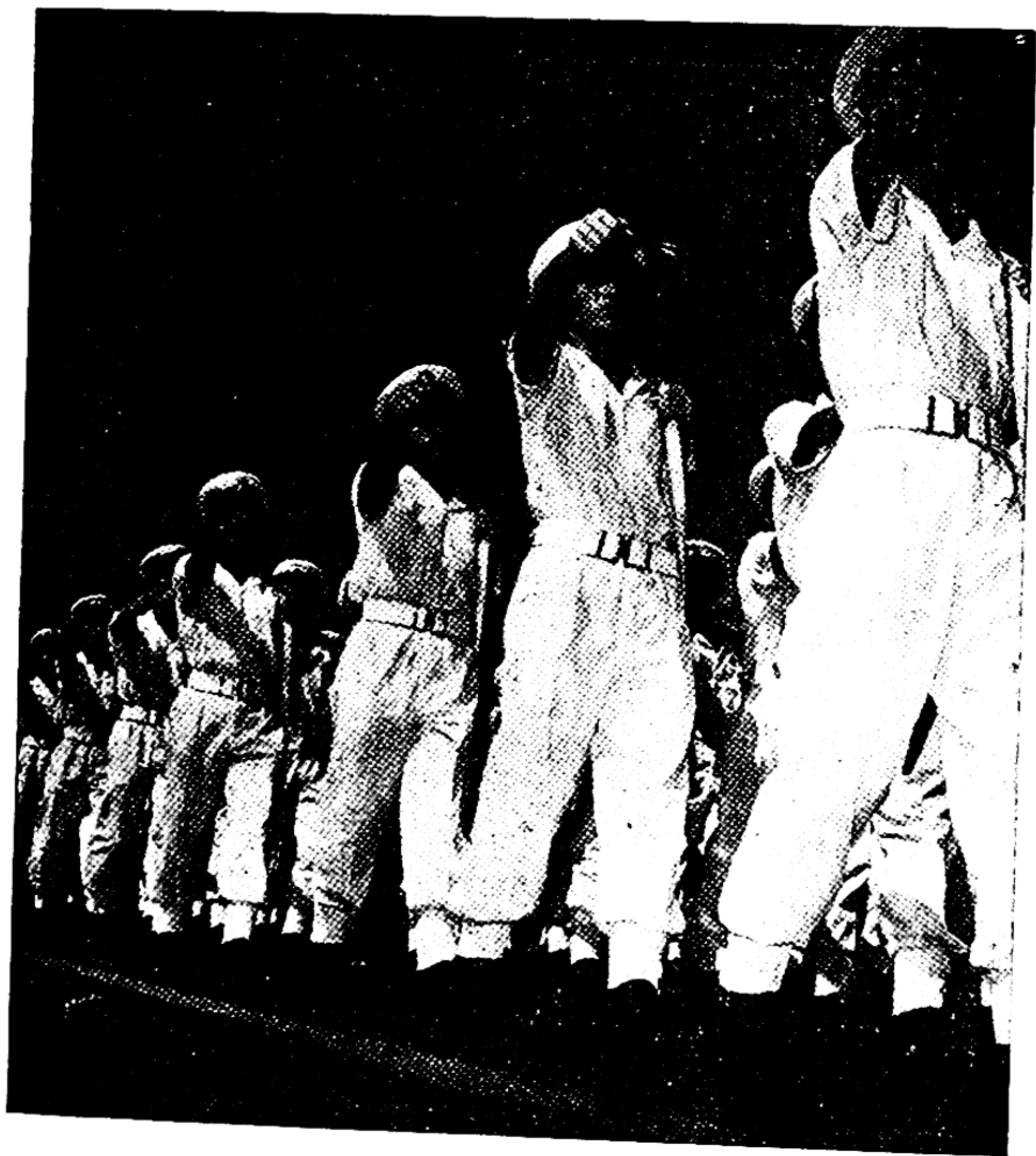
His most serious problem at this time was his struggle with the Mamelukes for the mastery of Egypt. All efforts at a pacific accomodation between them and himself proved of no avail. Until 1811, they were by no means disposed of. They could neither dispossess the Pasha nor could he obtain a decisive victory over them.

When he was called by the Sultan to prepare himself for the Wahhabi expedition, he saw that events in Arabia could secure a triumph for him and an extension of his political powers. He believed that the time would come when the Mamelukes were to be completely deprived of their economic and political power in Egypt. He told the Turkish Government that the convenient moment had come for getting rid of the Mamelukes before attacking the Wahhabis in Arabia. He stated that he could not reduce his own forces and leave the Mamelukes in a position to regain power. To get rid of

them it was necessary to assemble as many of them as possible in some secure place from which they could not escape. That was done in the massacre of the Citadel on 1st. March, 1811. This massacre was followed by the slaughter of the remaining Mamelukes wherever they could be found.

The second trouble which Mohammed Ali hoped to overcome, was due to forces which consisted of Albanian soldiers, who were no more than an armed rabble, unused to discipline, and kept in check only by regular pay and severe punishment. For these reasons, the Pasha decided to establish a new code of military discipline called «Al Nizam Al Jadeed» or the New System. He was quick to realize the superiority of European methods of warfare, and, as the first step towards the creation of the Empire of which he dreamt, he decided to build an Egyptian army and a fleet designed on European models. For the first time in many centuries, the ruler of Egypt commanded a pure Egyptian Army. The artillery train and staff were brought by the French up to European standard. By 1823, Egypt had twenty thousand regulars and by 1826, it had ninety thousand. With the help of French experts, Egypt got an efficient fleet, first in the Red Sea and then in the Mediterranean. The first fleet, which was destroyed in the Battle of





Egyptian Naval Cadets





Navarine (October 20th, 1827) was purchased, but the second was built in Egypt. In 1832, it comprised eight battleships, fifteen frigates, and twelve thousand sailors.

With this new army, well equipped and trained in the most modern European methods, Egypt undertook the suppression of the Greek revolt (1824). Ibrahim was sent by his father first to Crète, which he quickly reduced, and then to the Morea (the ancient Peloponnese). In spite of his success there, the intervention of the Great Powers caused the evacuation of the Egyptian troops from Morea by agreement between the British and Mohammed Ali. This happened after the appearance of Codrington's fleet off Alexandria. Perceiving that further resistance would end in the loss of his power Mohammed Ali ordered his son to return.

Thereupon followed a ten-year struggle between the Sultan and Mohammed Ali, in which the Egyptian army overran the Ottoman Empire and advanced almost to the gates of Constantinople. The Sultan turned in his despair to the Russians, and the latter sent ships and troops to Constantinople.

It was unfortunate for Mohammed Ali's imperial ambitions that « the British Foreign policy

in this crisis was the spirited but the spasmodic plunging peculiar to Palmerston ». Palmerston's policy was based on a careful study of two problems viz: British interest in the east and the balance of power in the west. The Egyptian expansion in Syria, Yemen, and the Persian Gulf convinced Palmerston that Mohammed Ali was in reality biding his time. «It would never do to allow Turkey to be crushed between an Egyptian Empire advancing from the south and a Russian Empire advancing from the North.» (1) Palmerston had already spared no efforts to « substitute for the treaty of Unkiar Skelassi an instrument which would place the Sultan under the protection of all the Great Powers », (2) The agreement of the Five Powers on July 27th 1839, followed on two catastrophic events - the complete routing of the Turkish army in Nazib, and the betrayal of the Turkish fleet by its admiral, to Egypt. Thus, defeated on land and deserted at sea, the Turkish government offered to make terms with Mohammed Ali, promising him the hereditary viceroyalty of Egypt with Syria as an appanage for his son Ibrahim.

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(1) Temperly p. 96

(2) Webster : Palmerston, Metternich and the European System, p. 25

The Five Powers thereupon, intervened by presenting a joint note to the Porte, urging that no final decision should be taken without their concurrence, since the dispute between Turkey and Egypt had become a question of European concern. The crisis of 1839-1841 brought about the reconstitution of the « Concert of Europe » — the combination of the great Powers for united action. By the treaty of London of July 13th 1841, Mohammed Ali was given, under international guarantee, the Government of Egypt as a hereditary possession, subject to ratification by the Porte and the payment of a fixed Egyptian tribute.

The unity of purpose between the Great Powers in the Near East was the main instrument whereby Egypt eventually fell away from the Ottoman Empire. The force which had worked to preserve Turkish integrity in the middle of the nineteenth century was the main cause of the Sultan's loss of all real control over Egypt from 1875 onwards. Once more, the most important factor in Egypt was to be the rivalry between Britain and France, as it had been in the Napoleonic period.

Mohammed Ali's successors possessed neither his experience nor his energy. They plunged the country into debt, by their extravagance, mismanagement and the large debts contracted during the

building of the Suez Canal. Khedive Ismail was obliged to borrow money, and did so on a vast and heedless scale. This reckless contraction of European loans was the primary cause of European intervention. The British bondholders, however, sent Goschen to Egypt, who, together with Joubert, the French expert, arranged the reorganization of the debt.

Ismail was compelled to nominate two Controllers-General as financial controllers to supervise respectively the country's revenue and expenditure. One was to be British, the other French.

Thus began the period of Anglo-French condominium in Egypt. It coincided with the rise of Egyptian nationalism. Indeed, the first stirrings of Egyptian nationalism took the form of a protest — against the way Ismail was mortgaging Egypt's independence by contracting huge European loans and sucking its life blood by merciless taxation. This Egyptian national movement derived from different kinds of opinion, and was divided into different channels of expression. The three parties of Egyptian Nationalists who could have united to form a national government were much the same as in other oriental nations then in the making.

First there was a strong movement for reform based on Islamic ideals and institutions. This had



always had its centre of action in Egypt. Islamic reform was at this time headed by a remarkable man, Jamal el-Din Al-Afghani. Nowhere else did this leader exert so profound and lasting an influence as in Egypt.

Next in order came the Constitutionalists, headed by Sherif Pasha, who was then prime minister. These constitutionalists saw salvation in the adoption of a western constitution, which should incorporate as far as possible existing Egyptian institutions.

On his accession, Khedive Tawfik kept Sherif, who at once submitted to him a draft Constitution. This the Khedive rejected, and Sherif thereupon resigned (August 1878). Tewfik explained that he considered the Constitution as a mere (*décor de théâtre*) and that he intended to return to personal despotism. The British and French controllers approved his rejection of the Constitution and advised him to appoint as Prime Minister Riad Pasha, who was a member of the «Turkish» party, and who was backed by the British. Riad's Ministry included Othman Rifky as Minister of War — a reactionary, who despised the Egyptian regimental officers.

There were, no doubt, other grievances involved. Egyptian regimental officers found themselves relegated with the rank and file to working as navvies on canals and roads. If they ever fought in Abyssinia, where their lives were thrown away, it was by the bad strategy and staffwork of Palace protégés. The accession of Tawfik brought no redress but only reductions of pay and promotion to pay for the foreign control and the foreign creditors. He did not only prefer Circassians and Turks for promotion, but also made a point of putting on half-pay or dismissing altogether a large number of Egyptian officers. He made matters worse by proposing a law which reduced military service to four years instead of five. In the opinion of Egyptian officers this would inevitably handicap Egyptian soldiers by making it difficult for them to qualify as officers.

Meanwhile, Egypt was boiling with anger. The attitude of Egypt may be summarised as a reaction to the old triumvirate of autocratic Khedive, Turkish oligarchy, and foreign controllers. The elimination of the Constitutionalists and suppression of the Chamber resulted in handing over the sole representation of the national movement of the army. At this point, Orabi stepped into the history of Egypt.

The demonstrations under Orabi were orderly political operations with popular support. They were performed by pure Egyptian regiments led by pure Egyptian Colonels in alliance with the Constitution-  
alists.

The army, it must be remembered, was the only representative body of the Egyptian Fellahin. They provided not only the ranks but also officers. Orabi was the son of a village Sheikh, and a student of Al-Azhar. He was conscripted at the age of fourteen, made a captain at the age of twenty and a lieutenant colonel a year later. He served in the campaign of Abyssinia in 1876 and at its conclusion was placed on half-pay. He spent the period of retirement in reading theological and historical books, and became known for his power of expression. He was a fluent speaker and could quote freely from the Koran and sometimes from Arabic literature. He began to participate in army politics, and succeeded in arousing the interest of the Egyptians in various shades of opinion, and making them believe in his views. When he was brought back to the active list, he found in his colleagues Abdel 'Aal, Ali Fahmy and other officers sympathetic followers.

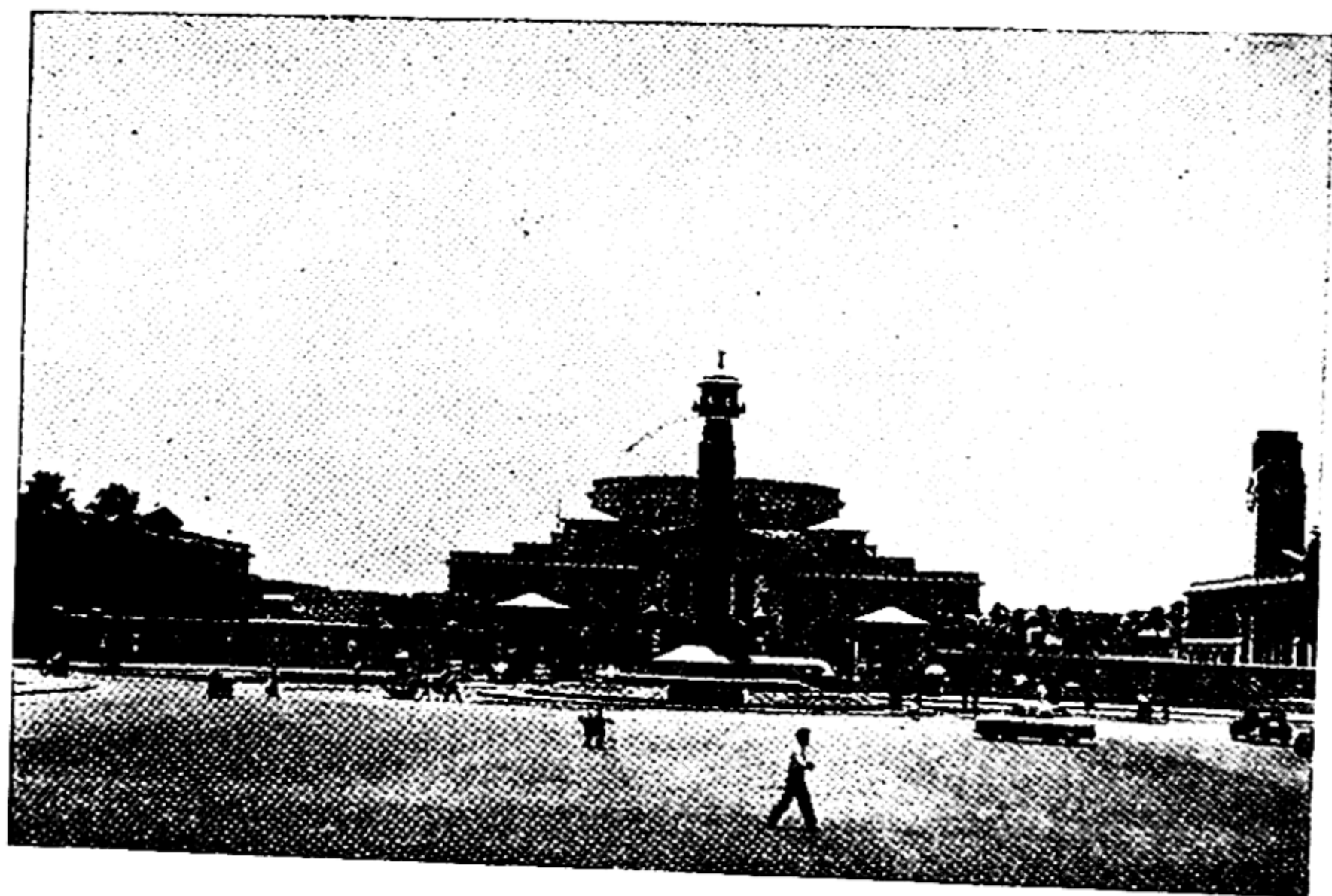
The first appearance of the army in politics was a reasonable step which received even the

approval of the foreign consuls. A petition for redress of grievances as to pay and promotion was presented by Ahmed Orabi and his colleagues (May 20, 1880).

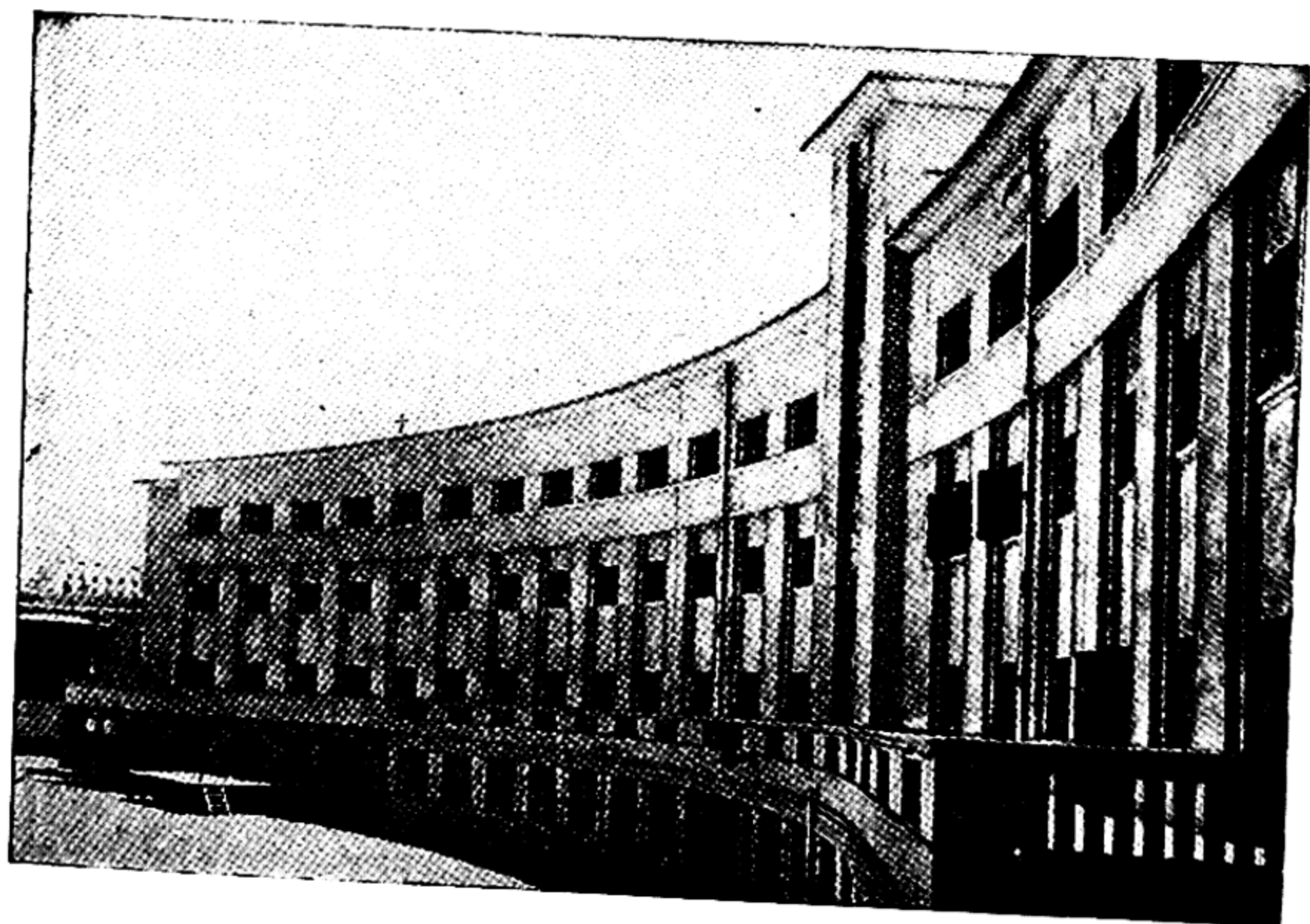
The next move was a demand for the dismissal of Osman Rifki Pasha, the Circassian minister of War, courageously presented to Riad in person by Orabi (January 15th. 1881).

The Khedieve thereupon called a Council of Ministers, and it was decided to arrest Orabi and his colleagues. But neither the Khedieve nor Osman Rifki had the moral courage to face the heroes with that decision, and they chose to decoy the Colonels into a trap by asking them to see the Minister of War on the following day. The next morning they went to the Ministry of War at Kasr El-Nil barracks, and as soon as they were within its walls they were disarmed and arrested and were taken to the council chamber. The court-martial was a failure. Hardly had the trial begun than troops from Abbassia burst in on the court-martial, pushed them off their chairs, emptied the inkpots on their heads, chased them with roars of laughter out of the windows, set Orabi and his colleagues free and escorted them in triumph to Abdin Palace. There Orabi demanded the dismissal of Osman Rifki and the appointment of





The University at Giza.



A Model School Building.





Mahmud Sami Al Baroudi as Minister of War and the promulgation of a Constitution for Egypt. Moreover he appended a programme of reforms and his demands assumed a national character.

This Kasr El Nil incident made Orabi and his regiments the spokesmen and heroes of the national movement.

Though Orabi had temporarily made peace with the Khedive, yet he did not trust him. And Tawfik, instead of taking the obvious course of restoring Sherif and the Constitutionalists to power, suddenly replaced Mahmud Sami as Minister of War by Dawood Pasha Yakan, the Khedive's brother-in-law and a reactionary Circassian of the most violent type. Measures were about to be taken to transfer Orabi's regiments to the provinces. Orabi and his friends the Colonels thought that if they did not move to the next milestone the Khedive and the Government would soon overtake them and deprive them of all power. The success of Orabi in the demonstration of February 1st. drew around him the rank and file of the Egyptian nation. Thus, when Orabi planned the demonstration of September 9, he made it clear that he was speaking not in the name of the army but in the name of the Egyptian nation. He informed the Consuls-General of his intention to muster

the troops in Abdin Square in order to submit the national demands and assured them of public safety.

Orabi at the head of the Abbassiya garrison occupied Abdin Square. He sent a message to Tawfik to meet them there. The Khedive was taken by surprise. He called Sir Aucland Calvin, the English Controller, to accompany him into the square surrounded by the insurgent regiments. Calvin did his best to induce the Khedive to arrest or even shoot Orabi. But the Khedive whispered hopelessly «What can I do ? I am trapped in the middle of four fires».

Recognising his defeat, the Khedive accepted the terms of the victor : the dismissal of Riad's Cabinet and the meeting of the Chamber of Delegates. On September 14 Sherif accepted Office and nominated Mahmud Sami El-Baroudi as Minister of War.

A decree was issued inviting the Chamber to meet according to the old system on December 26. The day on which the Chamber met was a memorable day in the history of modern Egypt. The chamber was the first constituent assembly that ever met in Egypt to draw up a constitution for the country. Meanwhile Orabi was nominated Under-Secretary of State for War.

The new government submitted the draft constitution to the chamber on January 2nd, 1882. This conformed to modern European constitutions.

The only opponents to the new Constitution were the Khedive who was deprived of his despotic power and the foreign Controllers who were deprived of their complete authority over the budget. On January 8th, less than a fortnight after the meeting of the Chamber, a dual note was presented to the Khedive by the French and the English Consul-Generals.

In this dual note France and England declared emphatically that they were determined to maintain order in Egypt and support the Khedive. The Joint Note ended all possibility of a constitutional settlement.

The Khedive found support in his opposition to the Chamber.

The Sultan was irritated. Every element of disturbance was aroused to activity. This joint-Note was one of those unfortunate attempts of intervention by foreign powers. It weakened the position of the Khedive whom it was meant to support and strengthened the resistance of the Nationalists whom it was meant to intimidate. Orabi had, by now, become the only national hero who

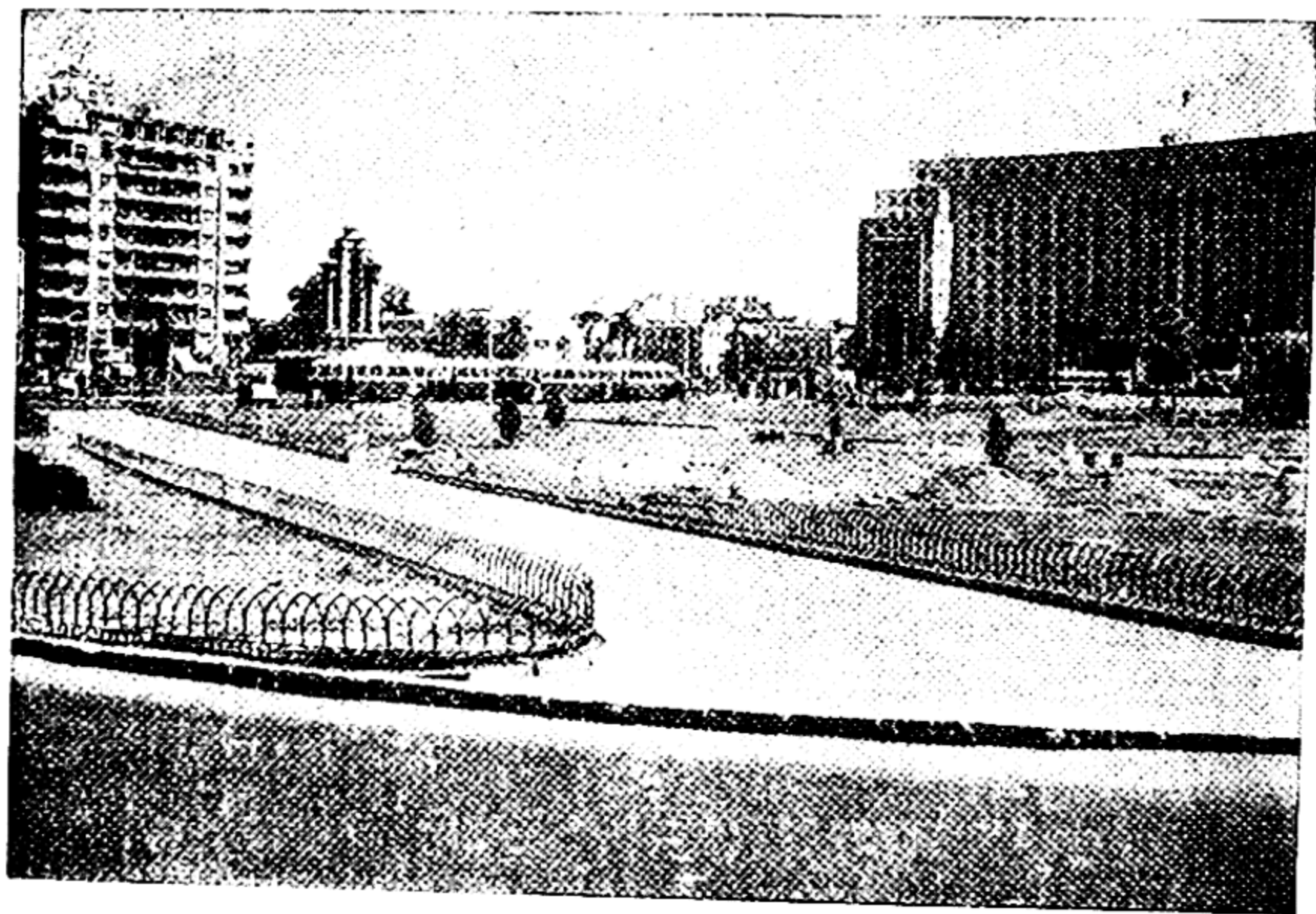
won all the confidence of the Egyptian nation. An Anglo-French naval squadron made a demonstration off Alexandria. This only served to annoy the Egyptians and to strengthen Orabi. On June 11, riots began in Alexandria and England seized the opportunity. The British started to act vigorously and decided not to negotiate but to attack and occupy Egypt. France refused to co-operate. On July 11, the British squadron bombarded the forts of Alexandria and promptly destroyed them. Military action speedily followed the naval operation.

Through treason and intrigue, England succeeded in overthrowing and arresting Orabi at the unfortunate battle of TELL-EL-KEBIR.

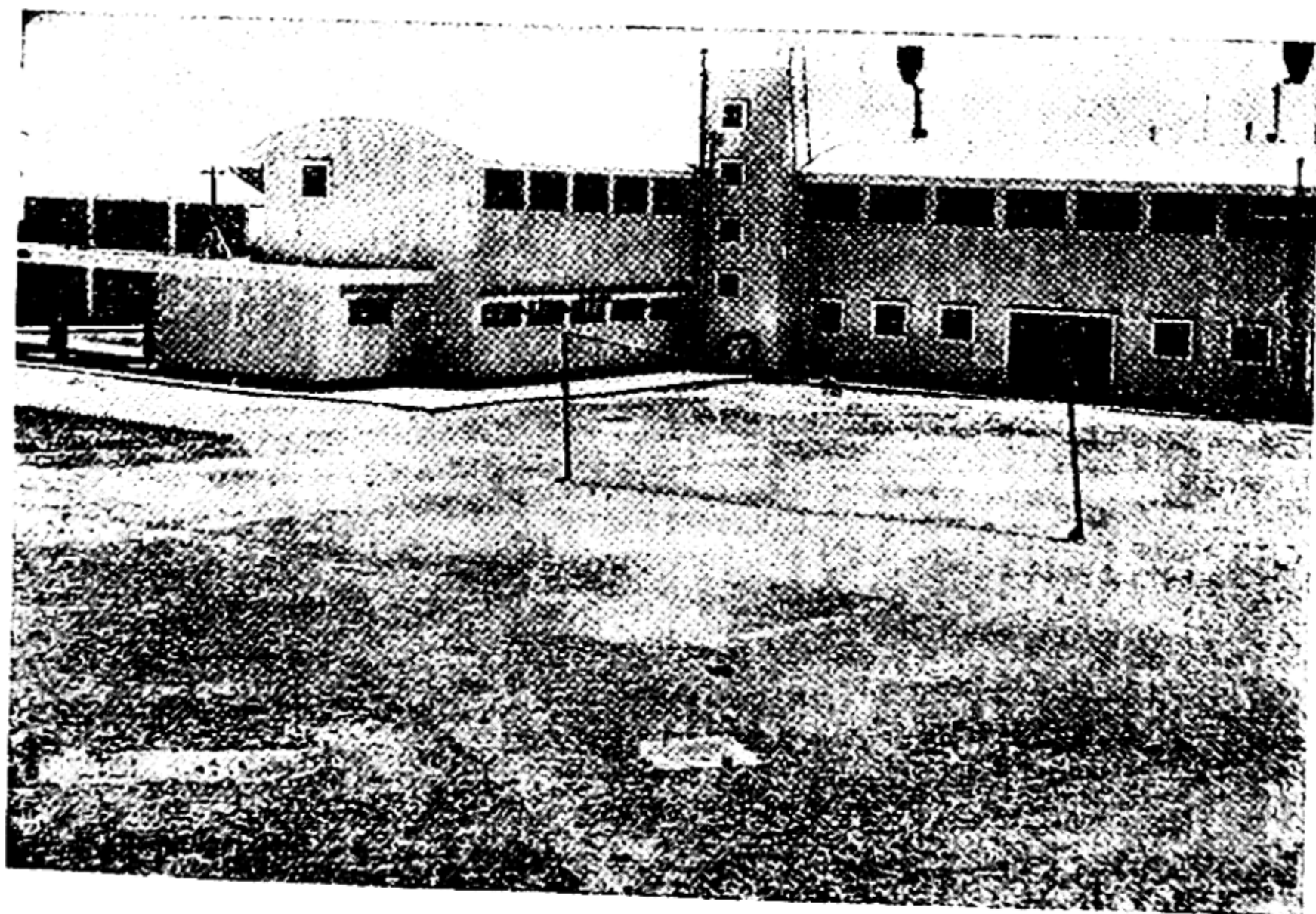
Though the Orabi Revolution failed, the seeds of discontent then sown have never since been eradicated, and the cry for freedom and independence has been steadily increasing in volume until it has reached its highest pitch at the present time.

With the trial and exile of Orabi in 1882, the British control over Egypt began. The British had promised to withdraw from Egypt as soon as the authority of the Khedive was restored. But Tawfik was merely a puppet in the hands of the British Government - in other words a British protégé.





Midan Al Tahrir.



Barnashet Public Services Unit.



The British authority over Egypt was based on military power, and centred round the commanding personality of the British Agent, Lord Cromer.

By the side of each minister he installed a British adviser, whose prerogative exceeded by far the simple rendering of advice. Wherever their opinions differed it was the Minister and not the Adviser who was forced to surrender; it was the Egyptian Mudir and not the Adviser's inspector who gave way; and consequently Egyptian opinion was by no means ever consulted.

Little or no attention was given to the public interests. Egypt appeared to be well on the way to becoming a British Colony — a possibility which the Egyptian Nation never lost sight of.

By 1894, the intolerable British oppression had risen to such a pitch as to arouse the dire hatred of all Egyptians. Mustafa Kamel, having just returned from France with a high degree in law, devoted himself heart and soul to the one object of freeing his beloved motherland from the tyrants. Before going to France Mustafa Kamel had published a magazine called «Al Madrassa» which was patently anti-British in its sentiment. And during his stay in France he persisted in this policy by attacking the British occupation in a series of inflammatory speeches.

On his return he imbued all young Egyptians with his patriotic spirit. He was in fact the Godsend so long awaited.

A gifted orator, a proficient writer, and a born leader of men, he was the one person to direct the aspirations of his countrymen along the right path. In 1899, appeared the first edition of his newspaper « Al Lewa », which was for many years the most powerful of all Egyptian political organs. Its avowed aims, to use Mustafa Kamel's own words, were « to defend the rights of Egypt and Egyptians, to claim Egypt's independence, to demand a democratic constitution, to reveal the corrupt acts of those in authority, to deny any fictitious charge brought against the Egyptian people ; to uphold the principles of justice and freedom, to eradicate any existing misunderstanding between natives and foreigners in Egypt, and to support the weak and the oppressed ».

These splendid principles represented the National renaissance under the leadership of Mustafa Kamel. Throughout this period Mustafa Kamel looked to the French for support and encouragement. When the Anglo-French Entente of 1904 was concluded it was not only a setback to his idealistic schemes but also a rude shock to him. Despite this despair he summoned all his powers and delivered a



message to the Egyptian nation in which he declared that Egyptians should depend upon nobody but themselves, and that such an agreement between the two imperialistic powers should serve as a lesson to all those nations aspiring to national independence and glory; for Independence could only be gained from within the strongholds of the nation itself.

By then, Tawfik had been succeeded by Abbas Hilmy. This Khedive started his reign inclined towards a democratic change. But this munificent feeling on his part disappeared altogether when the announcement of the Entente Cordiale was made.

Mustafa Kamel toiled hard and long and even attempted to work hand in hand with Abbas Hilmy, but proof after proof of the Khedive's insincerity showed him that all Khedives were born allies of imperialism.

In 1906, the Denshiwai affair, which was the result of the murder of one British officer, caused many Egyptians to be hanged and tortured. It gave Mustafa Kamel reason to denounce Lord Cromer's despotic Government.

That incident stamped Lord Cromer's rule as one of hate and cruelty, and hastened the end of his tyranny in Egypt.



Mustafa Kamel worked so hard for the good of his country that his health gave way.

On the 10th. of February, 1908, he died, and yet the conflagration that he had kindled did not die with him, for such a man's work is immortal. That very conflagration grew and grew, and in the years that followed Egyptian resentment to the British occupation rose to a high pitch and resulted in the revolution of 1919. Mustafa Kamel's resurrection was a prelude to the revolution headed by Saad Zaghloul.

## Saad Zagloul and the 1919 Revolution

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As the thunder of the guns and the flares of the battle fronts died away in Europe in 1918, there came ominous growlings and gleamings from Egypt, where storm clouds had long been banking up unnoticed. The passive, but purely politic acceptance by the Egyptian Government of the protectorate imposed by the British Government entirely hid from British opinion the growth of the strong nationalist movement that had existed throughout the first World War in a more potent form than hitherto.

The British authorities in Egypt either overlooked the movement altogether or underestimated it. Some historians explain the Egyptian Revolution of 1919 as an explosion ensuing from war grievances, whereas in reality the explosion would have come sooner or later, war or no war. For the revolution of 1919 was the natural outcome of the nationalist movement which had been gathering force since the Orabi Revolution of 1882.

With the Armistice in 1918, Anglo-Egyptian tension reached a breaking-point. Various factors

endowed the already existing state of affairs with added vigour.

Besides the general grievance arising from the war, and the declaration of a protectorate much resented by all Egyptians, martial Law was still in force. Again, the Constitutional Assembly was still suspended and the press was still muzzled.

Into this scene of affairs stepped SAAD ZAGHLOUL realising the pent-up forces of Egyptian nationalism.

Saad Zaghloul was born some 96 years ago in the village of Ibiāna, of Gharbieh Province. He was the son of a village Omda, Sheikh Zaghloul.

In 1873, he came to Cairo for a period of study at Al-Azhar. There he sat at the feet of a great teacher and a man filled with genuine idealism, the Islamic Reformer Sheikh Muhammad Abdou; later he went to the University of Paris where he took a degree in law.

In 1893, he became a counsellor at the National Court of Appeal and in 1905 he was appointed Minister of Education. At that time he belonged to the moderate group of Nationalists, with whom Lord Cromer often sympathized. The high esteem in which Cromer held Saad Zaghloul is apparent in



Statue of Saad Zaghlul — Alexandria





the following extract from his farewell speech in Egypt. «A career of great public usefulness lies before the present Minister of Education, Saad Zaghloul Pasha. He possesses all the qualities to serve his country. He is honest; he is capable; he has the courage of his convictions. These are high qualifications. He should go far».

By the time, Saad Zaghloul stepped into the foreground of Egyptian politics he had indeed gone much farther than Cromer could even have dreamt. For, less than twelve years after the departure of Lord Cromer, Saad Zaghloul became the national leader, whom all Egyptians had long awaited to liberate them from British occupation.

In Saad Zaghloul they had a spokesman whose career inspired confidence in every class. He had facility in rhetorical appeal, and long experience in political affairs.

With the Armistice, Egypt was found prepared with a strong case for complete independence, a case made solid by the fourteen-point plan of President Wilson.

No sooner was the Armistice signed than Saad Zaghloul, at the head of a deputation, called at the British Residency, and « on behalf of the whole

Egyptian people » laid before the High Commissioner, Sir Reginald Wingate, a formal demand for the abolition of the Protectorate and the recognition of the complete independence of Egypt. On being informed that the Commissioner was not acquainted with the views of the British Government, Saad Zaghloul applied for permission from the military authorities to proceed to London at the head of a delegation representing the people of Egypt, in order that he might lay their case before the British Government. This request was rejected by the British Government. Zaghloul's reply was carefully thought out and completely reasonable. Reconsideration of the rejection was urged by Wingate, whose experience in Egypt had taught him not to underestimate the power that lay in the ranks of the Egyptian nationalists. No reconsideration, however, took place. This refusal, giving the revolutionary agitation a weighty appeal, marked a turning-point in the annals of Egyptian history.

The immediate objective of Zaghloul and his supporters at the time was threefold. In the first place they hoped to obtain public mandate authorizing Saad Zaghloul and his colleagues to act as spokesmen for Egypt. In this capacity, Saad Zaghloul would face the British with documented evidence of country-wide support. Having gained British leave,

they would then proceed not only to London to influence British public opinion, but also to Paris to place their case before the Peace Conference.

Saad Zaghloul then sent each of the Big Four : President Wilson, Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Signor Orlando — a well argued case for Egyptian independence. The same case was submitted to the Conference, with the addition of a strong protest against the British prohibition of Egyptian representation at Paris.

Rushdy Pasha, then Egyptian Prime Minister, in his turn demanded that an official delegation to include Saad Zaghloul, be sent to London. This request the British rejected, fearing that it would give rise to nationalist aspirations which it would be much to their detriment to concede.

Rushdy Pasha resigned leaving the field to Saad Zaghloul.

Agitation meanwhile threatened to turn into violence, and the British military authorities were forced to deport Zaghloul and three of his colleagues to Malta. This set in motion a series of strikes, acts of violence, and a widespread revolution among workers and fellahin. Railways, telegraph and telephone communications were in the main part

destroyed and Cairo became isolated from the rest of the country. The storm began to rage.

Seeing that what they had refused to believe would ever materialise, had in fact materialised, the British now adopted a conciliatory policy, personified by the new High Commissioner, Lord Allenby.

The four deported leaders were released and Saad Zaghloul went off to Europe to lay Egypt's case before the Peace Conference. Throughout the whole of Egypt, the news that Zaghloul and his colleagues had been released and had proceeded from Malta to Paris was greeted as a great national triumph.

The primary object of Saad Zaghloul in proceeding to Paris had been to seek a hearing for Egypt's case. This he now failed to achieve, and the formal recognition by President Wilson of Egypt as a British Protectorate showed Saad Zaghloul that the dispute could only be settled by blood, toil and sweat.

The British Government in the meantime sought to come to a settlement while Saad Zaghloul was still away.

A mission was sent to Egypt under Lord Milner, seeking such settlement, but it was met by a complete boycott.



The agitation could not be kept within the limits of a boycott; public demonstrations raged, schools rebelled and the country was in flame.

In spite of the boycott, Lord Milner made a fair estimate of the situation and realised that the Nationalist Movement in Egypt had far more support than British circles in Egypt had led their Government to believe. Back in London, Lord Milner conferred with Saad Zaghloul.

The talks were doomed to failure, for the British were totally reluctant to accept the complete independence which Saad Zaghloul demanded.

Saad Zaghloul returned to Egypt where he was met with a thunderous welcome. He was proclaimed the leading political personality of the day.

All this served to make Saad Zaghloul renew his efforts for independence with added vigour, and the British realised that for them the state of affairs was going from bad to worse. Zaghloul was ordered to desist from all political activity, but he defied the order and was this time deported to Seychelles. Egypt at once burst into another wave of emotion. Seeing no hope of agreement with Saad Zaghloul, and realising the hopelessness of trying to gain any agreement with Egypt without full concessions, the British Government decided upon a unilateral declaration. On the 28th. February 1922, Sultan Fuad was informed that the Protectorate was terminated, and that Egypt would be declared an independent sovereign state.



All was well for a while. The constitution of 1923, whereby Saad Zaghloul became Prime Minister, was a bright spot.

The murder of Sir Lee Stack in 1924 was seized by the British as an opportunity to remove Saad Zaghloul from power, and to suspend parliament.

Saad Zaghloul died in 1927 without having reached an agreement with Britain. His successors were equally unsuccessful. Negotiations were resumed from time to time but always ended in a deadlock.

With Moussolini's conquest of Abbyssinia, Britain had to come to terms with Egypt. The terms, however, were mostly Britain's not Egypt's. An Anglo-Egyptian Treaty signed in August 1936, nominally accorded full independence to Egypt, but left for 20 more years the full military control of the Suez Canal Zone and of practically the whole of Egypt in Britain's hands. True it annulled the regime of capitulations in Egypt, a humiliating survival from old Turkish time, but Egypt still had its grievances against Britain.

In his old age Saad Zaghloul had been a uniting force in a coalition cabinet which disintegrated with his death, throwing Egyptian politics into a turmoil, that was to last for close on a quarter of a century. Yet the forces that had determined those years of struggle never died. They may indeed have been dormant, but their existence was proved on July 23rd. 1952.

## **Egypt in its New Era**

When the present regime took over in July 1952 it met urgent and important problems the solution of which demanded patriotism and expediency.

Long-due reforms were introduced with the aim of improving the economic conditions of the country and the standards of living of the working classes. This is to be achieved by means of economic development and the creation of new sources of wealth.

The aim of the present government was to establish the suitable conditions needed for social justice, a more equitable distribution of wealth and to provide full employment and equal opportunities for all without discrimination.

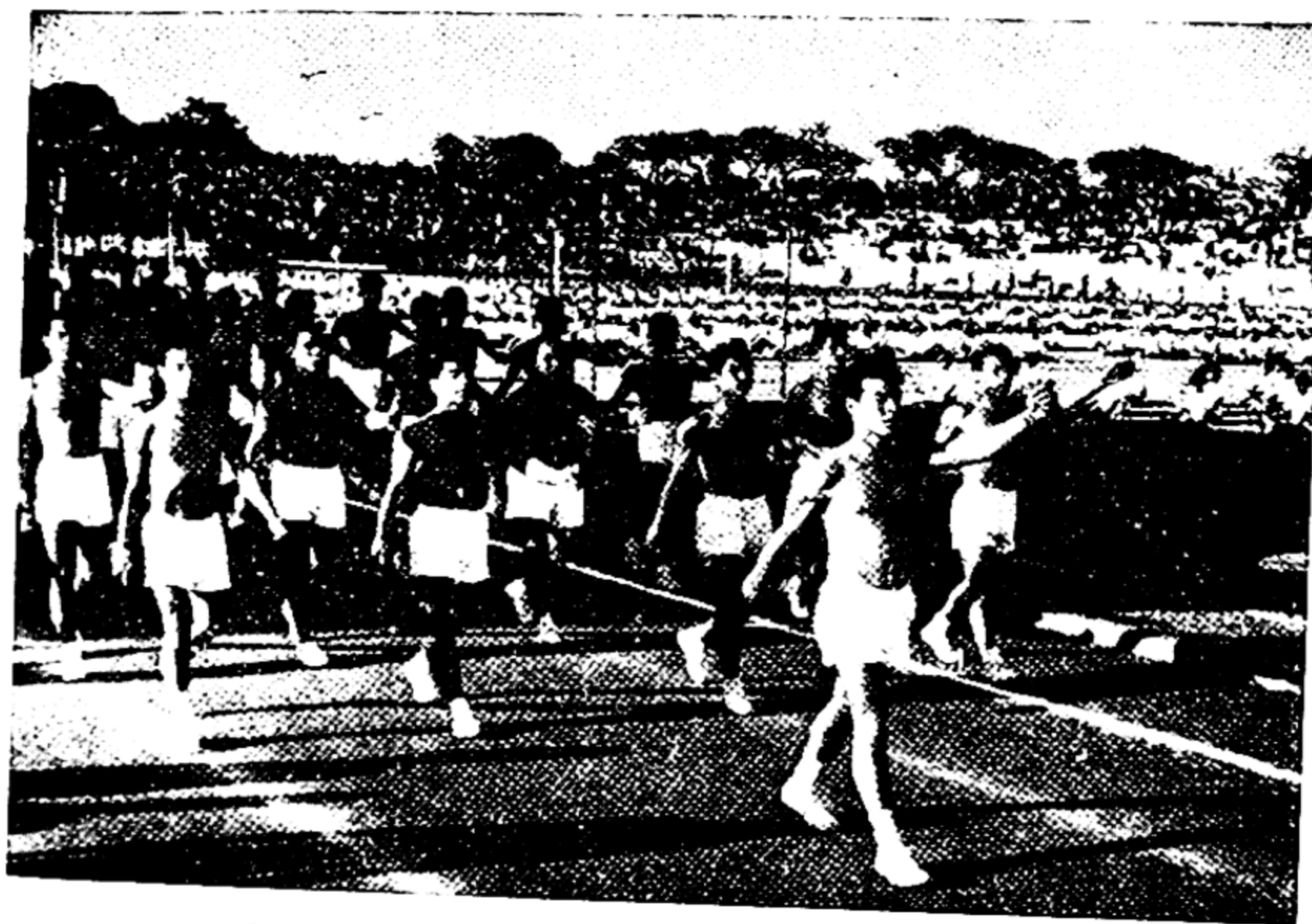
They removed the monopolistic pressure of capital which used to exert substantial influence on the policy of production and of investment.

The consequences of such reforms will undoubtedly check any tendency to subversive activities or destructive ideologies.

One of the most progressive legislations introduced was the Agrarian Reform Law. The need for such a reform was obvious. Twenty-two million people cultivate an area of six million acres of arable land. Ownership of land was monopolised by a few wealthy proprietors. This of course had its effects both on our political and social life, apart from hindering the growth of the country's economy. On the one hand, there was relatively small investment in industry and on the other, there was exploitation of tenants and agricultural labourers. This in turn limited the purchasing power of the agricultural population and drastically contracted the market for industrial products.

The Agrarian Reform was designed to rectify this feudal structure of Egyptian economy. It has proceeded to do so by breaking up the large estates and limiting individual holdings to a maximum of 200 acres. This means that about 600,000 acres out of a total cultivated area of 6,000,000 acres will be redistributed among landless farmers with priority to those directly tilling the land.

Along with the Land Reform Law another important problem had to be faced — the limited area of agricultural land. To this, the government attaches paramount importance. In order to



Students of the Physical Training Institute.



Ibrahim Pasha Square





develop agricultural production, schemes are under-way for the reclamation of vast areas of desert and arid land by ensuring a greater supply of Nile water or underground water.

It has long been realised that agricultural production does not keep pace with the steady increase of the population. The area of cultivable land has remained about the same during the past half-century while the population has increased by 12,000,000. This has been the main cause for the low standard of living in general.

It is therefore imperative to increase agricultural products by increasing the land area under cultivation in order to meet the present and future demands for foodstuffs. Schemes are actually under-way for the reclamation of about 500,000 acres of land to be completed by 1956.

In this respect, we may refer to another bold project which aims at creating a new province in the arid lands bordering the fertile Delta.

The object of establishing the « Liberation Province » — as it is called — is twofold : economically, it will have the immediate result of increasing the actual cultivated area by a proportion of between 5 % and 10 %; socially, it aims at bringing about a new model of rural life which if proved

successful should be imitated throughout the country. The initial area of the new province is 600,000 acres which will be increased to 1,200,000 acres.

The new regime in Egypt is characterized by a general belief that our economic problems could be more rapidly and adequately solved by a healthy cooperation with friendly countries from whose technical knowledge and skill we can greatly benefit, and whose capital resources may be used in the country.

Some courageous and welcome steps have been taken in this direction. A law organising investment of foreign capital in Egypt was enacted in 1953, encouraging the inflow of capital funds and providing facilities for the repatriation of funds invested in Egypt, and their proceeds, as well as simplifying the transference processes of capital funds, and earnings by foreigners. This law facilitated exchange control procedures, besides other safeguards provided for the foreign investor.

New legislation was also introduced granting total exemption from the commercial and industrial profits tax, during a period of seven years, to such

enterprises as are engaged in projects which support the development of national resources, that is to say, agricultural development projects, and projects of industrial expansion, mining, quarrying and the like.

In order to encourage the importation of foreign capital and technical skill which help the development of the country's economy, the existing mining law has been revised. As a result, some of the companies signed agreements with the government for prospecting and exploitation of petroleum resources in several parts of the Egyptian deserts. Some of the major concessions were granted last year, while some others are about to be contracted. Meanwhile, prospecting activities are already underway in the Western and Eastern deserts. However, the mining legislation is again being revised and adapted to meet the new requirements of increasing investment in mining especially petroleum exploitation.

Laws regulating residence of foreigners have been re-studied and modified and new measures were adopted with the object of simplifying procedure and securing to the foreigner an undisturbed residence for a longer period in the country.

In the field of economic development the good efforts of the United Nations Technical Assistance

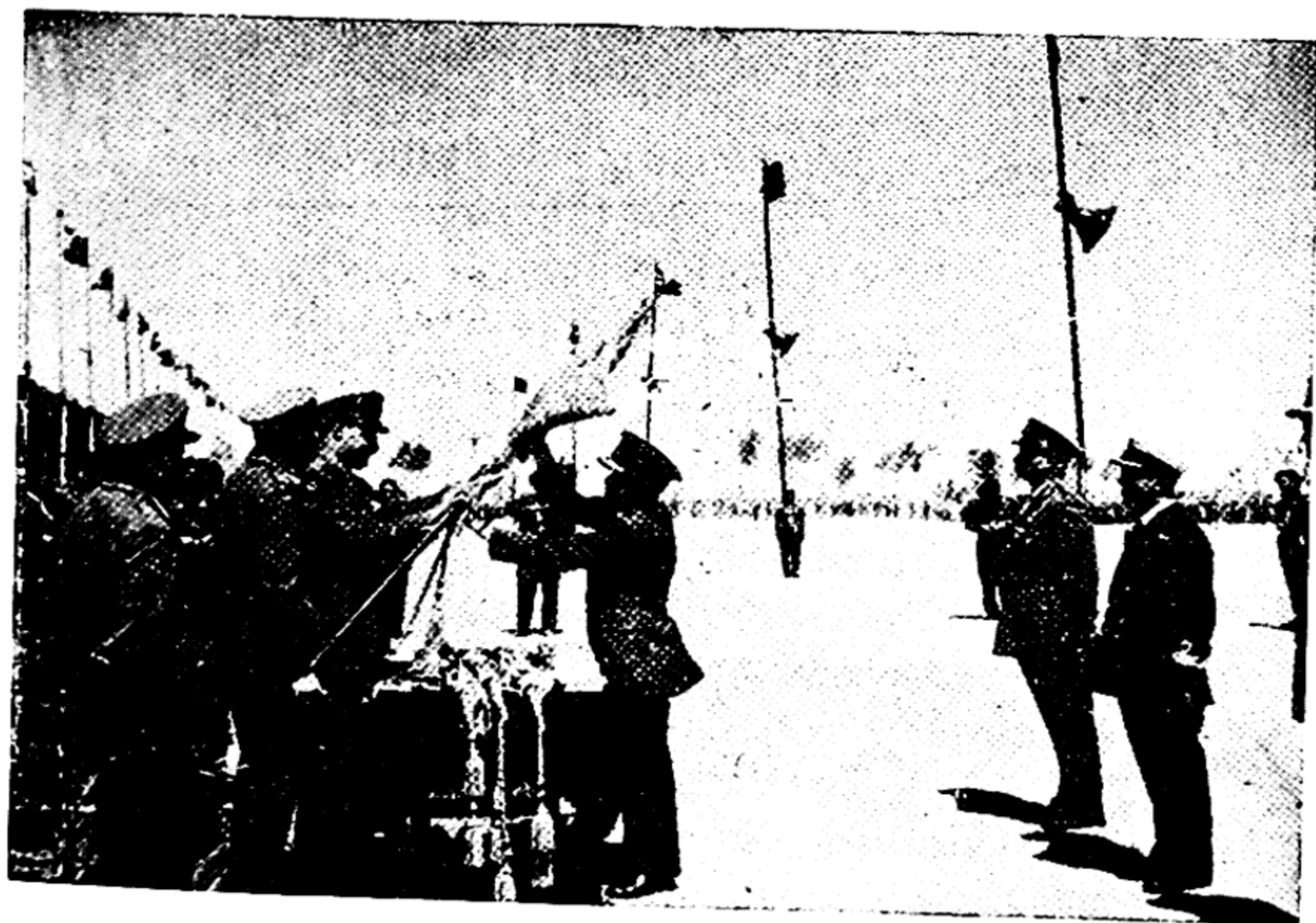
should not be overlooked. Egypt is drawing considerable benefit from such activities as expert services, training centres, scientific missions, training visits and technical experiments and surveys. The United States Technical Assistance Program known as the Point IV Program has been generously cooperating in the economic development program of Egypt by contributing technical skill, scientific knowledge, equipment, and funds.

In the past few months an economic aid and cooperation agreement has been signed between the Government of Egypt and the U.S. Government under which the latter contributes an amount of about 40 million dollars, to some specific development projects in the fields of transport, public works and irrigation.

It is of great significance to say a few words about the new Egyptian public finance and fiscal policy since it inaugurated a new era under the new regime.

The main feature of the fiscal policy adopted since 1953 is that it is based on two separate budgets; one, the ordinary or current budget, and the other, the projects budget which is a capital budget. This financial device was coupled by a policy of controlling current expenditures, and expanding capital expenditures on development projects.





El Shaloufa Air Port being handed over.





This projects budget was laid down for a period of four years covering expenditure on agricultural and industrial expansion, mining, hydro-electric power, petroleum production, transport and public works. An amount of L.E. 35 million was appropriated for the financial year 1953-54, and L.E. 54,200,000 for this year.

By resorting to public debts as a resource for government finance, it was found unnecessary as well as unfavourable to raise the level of taxation in order to secure public revenue. This wise policy of not relying so much on raising the rates of taxation during a period of economic development bears its fruit in increasing private incentive for investment. By borrowing from the public, while exercising a policy of restraint on current expenditure, the Government has succeeded in checking any inflationary tendencies. Last but not least, the Government has launched a public debt on the open market, widening the scope of the stock exchange market by which it attracted the investments and private savings of those who have to look for new avenues of investment apart from agricultural land. This new policy of increasing investment in stocks is a corollary to the Land Reform adopted in Egypt by the New Regime.

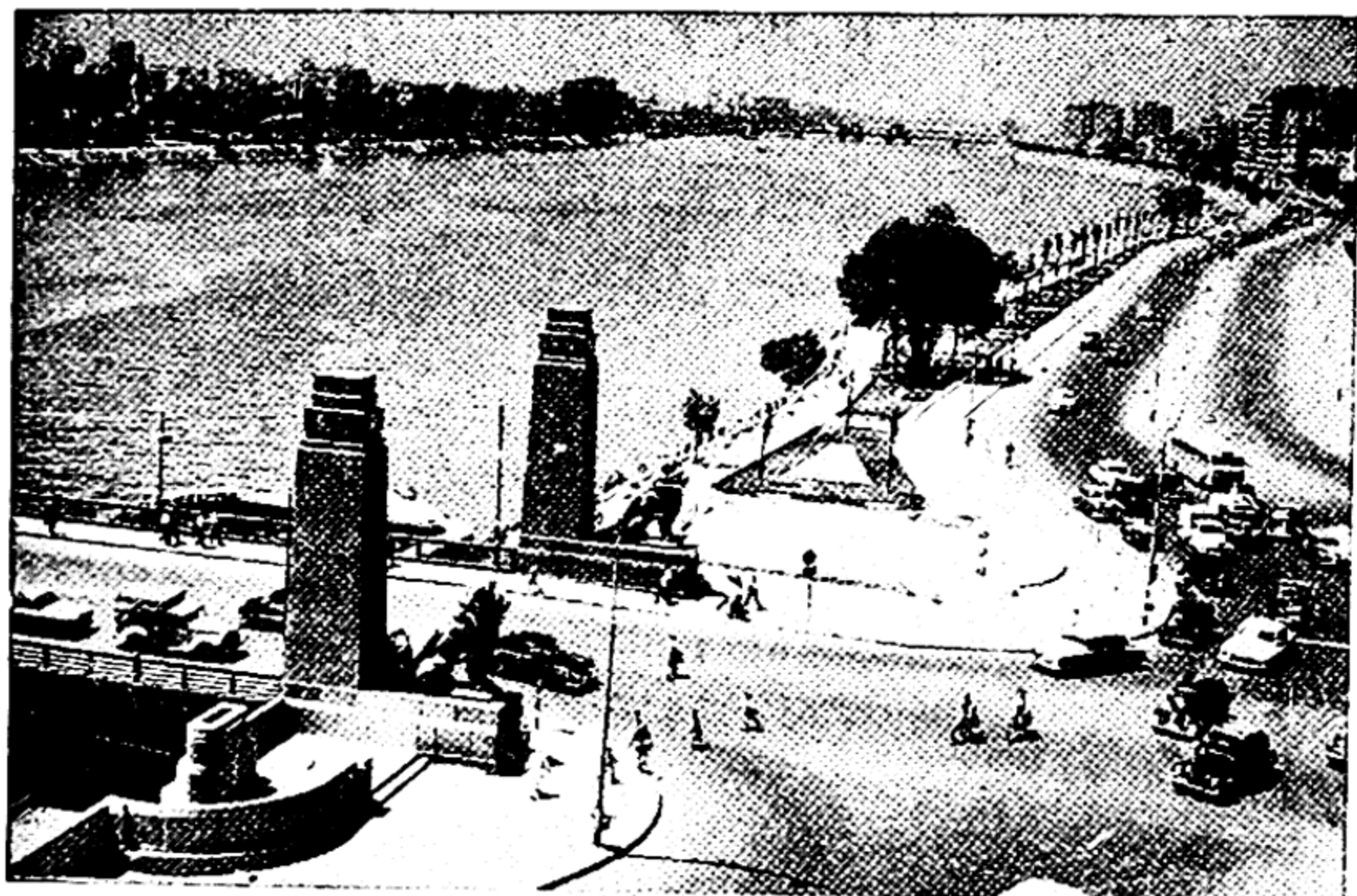
One of the most prominent institutions set up in the New Era to undertake the massive task of

economic development projects is the « Permanent Council for the Development of National Production ».

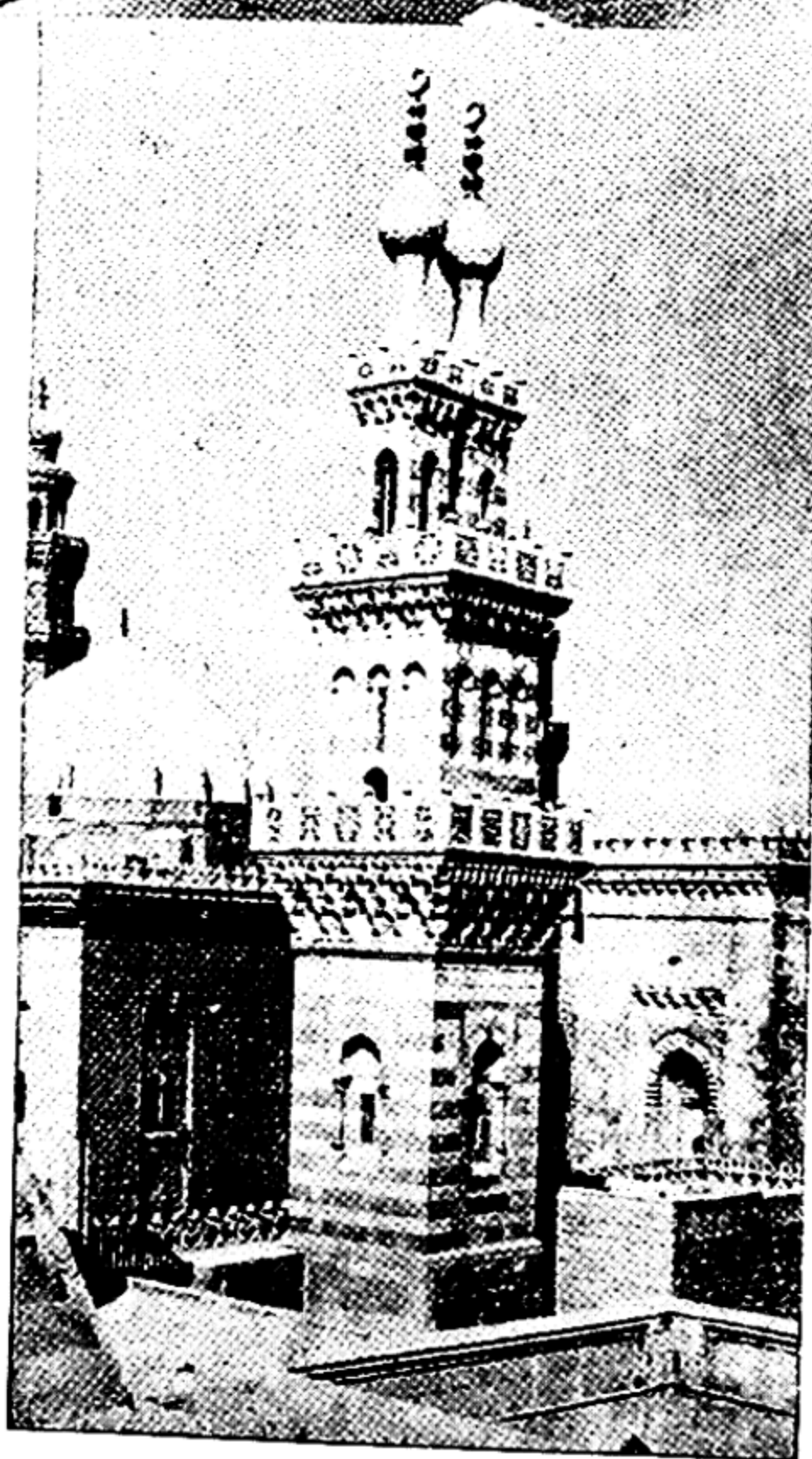
This Council was established at the beginning of 1953. Besides its planning functions, the Council is empowered to carry out certain schemes, to take part in the formation of companies, and to supervise important projects.

In the field of agricultural expansion a short term and a long-term program have been established. The first aims at improving and diversifying agricultural production. This would reduce the degree of sensitivity of Egypt's agricultural production to fluctuations in foreign demand and prices. Moreover, it is planned that such a short term program of agricultural development benefits our foreign trade balance a good deal. The long term program provides for the expansion of the cultivated land by regulating irrigation and by land reclamation.

In order to extend the area of cultivation the Council is studying an ambitious plan for increasing water-storage. The plan envisages the construction of a high dam above the present Aswan dam for storing about six years' flow of Nile water, and providing the country with all the electric power it needs.



The right bank of the Nile  
The New Corniche.



Al Ghouria Mosque, Cairo.





The initial cost of the dam is tentatively estimated at about L.E. 180 million and the time needed for its execution 10 years. It is estimated that about half the cost will be spent abroad.

In the industrial field an iron and steel company has been organised with a capital of L.E. 7 millions. It is also planned to erect a fertilizer plant for producing nitrates of ammonia near Aswan with a productive capacity of 370,000 tons per annum. Other industries to be encouraged are pharmaceuticals, electric batteries, motor car tyres, jute, cotton and rayonne industries and the processing of foodstuffs and agricultural produce. The policy of the Council in this connection is to protect home industries as well as exempt the raw materials imported for these industries from certain duties.

Public services, health, education, social services, housing, and public utilities, aim at raising the standard of the people and providing for them the means of a comfortable life. The proper organization and distribution of these services is bound to raise peoples' morale and turn them into better citizens capable of shouldering the responsibilities of life in a civilized community.

The Revolution Government has successfully tackled the problem of organisation and distribution of public services.

In the same way, as the National Production Council has been set up to develop the standard of production and draw up a policy for the promotion of national economy a *Public Services Council* has been set up to draw up a policy which aims at raising the standard of individuals and groups and providing them with the means of progress.

At present, the Permanent Council for Public Services is drawing up a large scale plan based broadly on two points :

1. The Organisation of government services and the preparation of appropriate budgets for each of their branches, so that money may be spent and efforts made only when they may prove fruitful and ensure the greatest benefit for the people.

2. The coordination of government and public services, and the encouragement of national organisations and institutions, by widening their scope of guidance, and urging individuals to participate in these organisations, so that the country may profit from human energy latent in the millions of citizens inhabiting cities and villages.

Research now, conducted by the members and experts of the Public Services Council, deals with the distribution of these services in proportion to

the areas, with the density of population, and the extent of people's need for the service. It also aims at estimating the extent of people's need for the service, the funds needed, and the capacity of the machine which will provide these services by assessing the individual's benefit from them.

This Council is preparing the necessary plans for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of villages and towns, for health and medical care projects, and for educational establishments and social services programs.

The Council secured financial resources from some extra-ordinary sources as well as from the State Budget amounting to 22 million pounds.

The Council has undertaken to carry out a number of projects such as the erection of hospitals, the building of lodgings and the provision of accommodations for workmen and students. Finally, it is important to mention the Council's ambitious policy of supplying potable water to Egyptian villages. The plan is to be carried out in six years, starting from the present financial year. The expenditure required annually for the execution of this plan has been estimated at L.E. 3 million.

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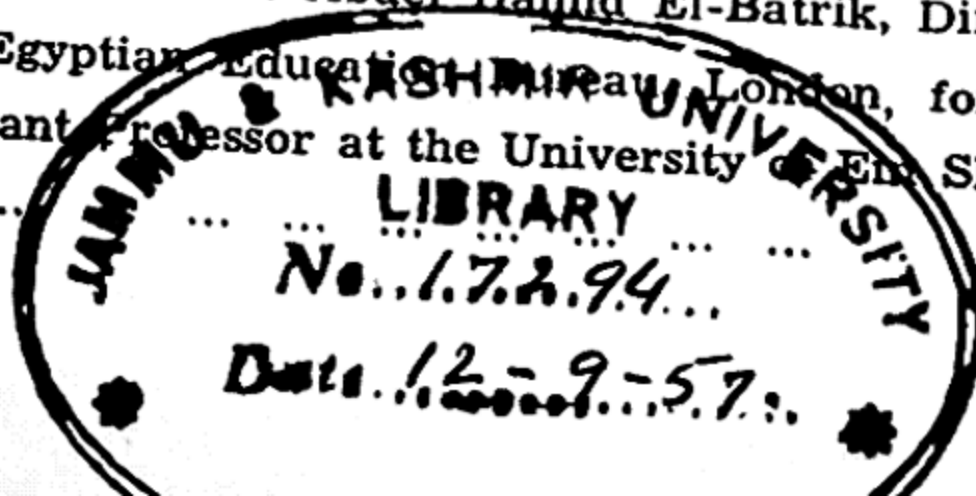


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12	5	nodaal	nodal
23	4	they	the
27	18	devided	divided
58	13	undevided	undivided
61	14	like	as
63	2	Califs	Caliphs
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